

AAWAZ

Theory of Change

February 15, 2015

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1. Introduction

AAWAZ is a five-year Voice and Accountability Programme (2012-17), which is being implemented in 45 districts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan. Funded by UK Aid through the Department for International Development (DFID), the programme is managed by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) and delivered through a consortium of five major non-governmental organisations (NGOs): Aurat Foundation (AF), South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-PK), Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO), Sungi Development Foundation and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). The Programme is in its third year of implementation. It was initiated with a theory of change in 2012 which has been refined by AAWAZ's experience of what has worked well and what needs to be reassessed.

This paper outlines the Programme's reworked theory of change, on the basis of which its current logical framework, costed work plans and value for money analysis have been reviewed.

2. Problem Analysis

In Pakistan, elite capture and control of resources has led to weak governance processes in all spheres – from the provision of basic municipal services to ensuring people's participation in decisions that affect their lives. The state, therefore, has not met the development and security needs of the majority of its citizens, which has limited the freedoms and opportunities of Pakistanis and deepened divisions along fault-lines of exclusion, such as class, caste, religion and gender. Extremist groups have become a powerful destabilizing force, exploiting and exacerbating existing divisions in society. Inequality, intolerance, and violence are on the rise. These factors have limited the capacity of citizens to hold the State accountable for their rights, freedoms and opportunities. Inevitably, women and excluded groups suffer the most. Patriarchal and authoritarian beliefs and attitudes, harmful cultural practices, religious and class/caste prejudice, discrimination, and violence or the threat of violence, perpetuate exclusion in the personal, social and political spheres.

Empowering women and excluded groups to challenge discriminatory norms and practices at the individual, household, community and social level is critical for strengthening democracy. Citizens - particularly women and excluded groups need to hold the state accountable and engage with it to reform the current patronage-based political system and for improved access to political decision-making processes,¹ as efforts to bring about change by focusing exclusively on supply-side governance have largely failed.²

¹ DFID strategy paper on *Realising Human Rights for Poor People* (2000), for example, argues that rights will become real only as citizens are engaged in the decisions and processes which affect their lives. ADB also considers citizen engagement essential for good governance www.adb.org/documents/periodicals/gb/GovernanceBrief17.pdf

² Many commentators including Hooper and Hamid *op.cit*; 'Pakistan: Eye of the Storm' Owen Bennet Jones, 2002;

3. AAWAZ Programme

The AAWAZ³ programme is designed to tackle exclusion by empowering women and socially excluded groups to become equal citizens of the State, willing and capable of holding the elite and the State accountable and challenging discrimination, patriarchy and harmful cultural practices. AAWAZ's programme goals reflect UK priorities articulated in the "Peace Building State Building Framework in Fragile States" (2010), the "Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness" (CAR) framework, and the UK's objective of '[building] the strong communities and institutions [in Pakistan] upon which democracy rests.' The programme also strongly reflects "A new strategic vision for girls and women: stopping poverty before it starts" (2011) which recognizes that the benefits of investing in girls and women are transformational for their own lives and for their families, communities, societies and economies and that empowering girls and women has multiplier effects for economic growth and for achieving all of the MDGs.

The programme is designed to address formal and informal barriers to a stable, inclusive democracy in Pakistan. These barriers include discriminatory policies and laws, political patronage, weak oversight mechanisms, and socio-cultural norms, behaviours and attitudes. As the evidence for this approach in Pakistan is variable, the programme has a strong focus on building a robust evidence base.

Programme Objective and Outputs

The programme strives to contribute to stable, inclusive and tolerant democracy with a focus on bringing women and socially excluded groups into leadership and decision-making positions.

The expected outcome of the Programme is that **democratic processes in Pakistan will become more open, inclusive and accountable to citizens.**

Working under the overall theme of improved governance, the programme aspires to bring change in the individual, social, political and legal spheres. The Programme adopts a four-pronged approach based on the assumptions that (i) enhanced women's participation; ii) increased peace and harmony; (iii) enhanced voice and accountability; and (iv) an improved evidence base can be used to achieve the overall programme objective.

Consistent with this understanding the programme is expected to deliver **four main outputs**:

1. Women better able to participate safely in politics and in public spaces at federal, provincial and local levels in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.
2. Citizens and communities better able to resolve disputes peacefully, and work together for common solutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

³ 'AAWAZ' is the word for 'voice' in Urdu and several other languages in the Western Asia region

3. Women and other excluded groups better able to demand improved delivery of services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.
4. Improved evidence generated, synthesised and communicated/championed to political leaders/elites in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

4. Theory of Change

AAWAZ has articulated its theory of change at two levels: an overarching theory for the programme and a theory of change for each programme output.

4.1 Overarching Theory of Change

The overarching theory of change for the programme is as follows:

- Democracies are better able to meet the development and security needs of citizens when citizens participate actively in influencing government policies and holding the state accountable.
- Pakistan is a transitional democracy and given the deepening divisions of class, caste, and gender and inequitable distribution of resources, enabling conditions need to be created to nurture active citizenship.
- Equality and acceptance of diversity are at the heart of democracy. AAWAZ believes that democratic culture can be promoted by focusing, in particular, on expanding the freedoms and choices for women and other excluded groups.
- Empowering women and girls and other socially excluded groups will have a transformational effect on their own lives, and their families, communities and societies.
- Raising awareness on the rights of socially excluded groups and women to freedom from violence and participation in politics (decision-making processes from the household to the national level); and information dissemination to citizens on laws, government processes and procedures will lead to individuals, communities and institutions reflecting on their role in perpetuating inequality and making positive changes in perceptions, attitudes and practices. These changes will lead to an increase in the social and political space available to women and socially excluded citizens, their self-esteem, voice, choice and control in the public and private spheres.
- AAWAZ will focus on engaging men and boys as champions of women's empowerment recognizing that this is critical to expanding freedoms and choices for women and girls. This will lead to women and men, girls and boys working together in informal and formal partnerships, to bring change

attitudes, behaviors, roles and responsibilities at home, in the workplace, in communities and in local and national institutions.

- Working directly with a critical mass⁴ of women and men, the programme will create communities of practice for active citizenship. These communities of practice will drive change and challenge discriminatory norms and harmful practices at the individual, household, community and national levels, with a focus on engaging with the State to influence it and hold it accountable.
- Creating apex forums (at the Union Council, tehsil, district, provincial and national levels) will help to bridge the gap between citizens and the state and expand the domain in which AAWAZ forum members exercise their citizenship. The forums will allow for more efficient and effective advocacy as issues can be more easily aggregated and escalated to higher tiers of government.
- Building coalitions through apex forums⁵, youth conventions and women's assemblies will amplify the voices of women and socially excluded groups and increase their capacity to influence the State and hold it accountable.
- Developing change agents – women and men with higher levels of motivation, knowledge and skills – will give AAWAZ forum members and women and men in villages quick access to knowledge needed to safeguard and claim citizenship rights. Change agents will also spearhead awareness-raising with women and men in the target area beyond AAWAZ forums.
- Use of quality evidence-based policy studies will help to generate credible evidence that can be shared with politicians and decision makers to influence policy reform.
- Advocacy and assistance for more legislation on women's and minority rights will create an environment which will enable women and socially excluded groups to participate in public spaces and occupy leadership positions.

4.2 Output-Specific Theory of Change

AAWAZ has, in addition, developed a theory of change in each of its four main output areas and the proposed activities are premised on its understanding of how change is likely to happen. Each of the main output areas and the specific actions that are being pursued to bring about change are outlined below:

⁴ 40 members at village level, 400 in 10 villages in a Union Council (UC), 4000 in 10 UCs in each district and 180,000 in 45 districts and those involved in youth and women's assemblies.

⁵ AAWAZ has established forums at the Union Council, Tehsil, District, Provincial and National level.

Output 1: Women better able to participate safely in politics and in public spaces at federal, provincial and local levels in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

There are simply not enough opportunities or spaces for Pakistani women to engage in as decision-makers, whether as individuals, in households, at the community level or as active citizens of the State.

Women's exclusion is secured by designating the home as the only natural and appropriate space for women, and using gender-based violence or the threat of it, to suppress their voices and limit their mobility, decision-making and access to and control over resources. Politics is considered a highly inappropriate activity for women's engagement, given that it is concerned with power and the occupation of public spaces. Most existing patterns of engagement reinforce these patriarchal norms. Women are excluded from the political process because of the lack of computerized national identity cards (CNICs) and voter registration, and the lack of support, information, skills, networks and resources needed to participate in and contest elections. The discrimination, violence and harmful cultural practices experienced by women lowers their self-esteem, discourages their participation and further marginalises them. The existing laws for safeguarding women's rights are inadequate and do not offer women sufficient protection. Even when laws exist, women are generally unaware of their rights as men and women have been socialised to accept the status quo.

Output 1: Pathways to Change

Based on field experience, some changes have been made in AAWAZ's initial strategy of village forum composition. The number of village forum members has been increased from 18 to 40 households, based on the finding that the initial number was too low to create much awareness about them.⁶ In addition, AAWAZ plans to test different cost-effective strategies to ensure the dissemination of key messages to the entire village through change agents. AAWAZ has identified four specific pathways to ensure increased women's participation:

- ▶ Creating public spaces and coalitions (forums, women's assemblies and youth assemblies) for women to participate in as citizens, will model the changes AAWAZ wants to promote. These spaces and coalitions will help to challenge the norm that women's domain is the four walls of the house, build women's confidence, change their self-perceptions and perceptions of others, and function as a stepping stone to greater participation in decision making.

⁶ According to AAWAZ's Perception Survey: 2014, 63% of the people in the programme village did not know about the village forums

- ▶ Awareness raising with women and men about women's right to freedom from violence and participation in public spaces and political processes will enhance women's self-esteem and dignity, help reduce violence by sensitizing men and women to their own role in it, and promote interventions which support women's rights to have voice, choice and control, make decisions, participate actively in the life of their community and to engage as active citizens with the State.
- ▶ Providing greater support and information through change agents and Aagahi (Information) centres will facilitate the formal inclusion of women – CNIC, voter registration, nomination papers for Local Government (LG) – and will help women and excluded groups access their rights as citizens.
- ▶ Engaging in advocacy and providing technical assistance for drafting laws will lead to an increase in legal protection for women's rights. This will deter Gender Based Violence (GBV) and enable women to feel more secure and occupy more space in the public sphere.

Actions to Achieve Output 1

- ▶ Conduct social mapping, review membership and develop village profiles/data to improve functioning of AAWAZ Forums from the village to the district level.
- ▶ Form AAWAZ Village (AVF) Union Council (AUF), Tehsil (ATF) and District Forums (ADF) consisting of between 20 to 40 households to meet periodically to discuss and reflect on issues.
- ▶ Strengthen AVF/AUF initiatives to make AAWAZ Aagahi centers women-friendly spaces and hubs of knowledge for women and excluded groups.
- ▶ Provide resources to support citizen's accountability initiatives.
- ▶ Conduct awareness raising sessions on the following (i) women's and socially excluded groups' rights as a critical indicator of a humane society and a focus on these rights as transformational at the individual and societal level (ii) true democracy being about promoting 'insaniyat' (dignity of human beings irrespective of gender, caste, class or religion) and inculcating democratic norms and values (equality, diversity, voice and choice) from the household to the national level.
- ▶ Conduct awareness raising sessions for women and men on (i) women's right to freedom from violence and participation in public spaces and political processes, (ii) roots of GBV, (iii) masculinities, and other relevant themes (based on standardized modules, in conjunction with audio visual aids).
- ▶ Conduct training of change-agents on women's rights, advocacy for social services and peace-building.

- ▶ Establish Aaghai Centres to provide information on existing laws, rights and information about public sector services.
- ▶ Conduct review and planning sessions of ANF and APFs on issues of gender based legislation, and social, political, cultural and economic rights and Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- ▶ Organize 'Women's Assemblies' to develop and present charters of demands on women's rights.
- ▶ Conduct annual 'Youth Conventions' for Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW&G) and implementation of laws on forced marriage and customary practices.
- ▶ Conduct campaign on women's rights to freedom from violence and participation in the private /public sphere.
- ▶ Conduct lobbying meetings/sessions/conference with policy makers, standing committees, legislators and political leadership on legislative proposals.
- ▶ Provide technical support for legislative analysis and drafting and formulating pro-women laws and policies around AAWAZ themes.

Output 2: Citizens and communities better able to resolve disputes peacefully, and work together for common solutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

Conflict is on the rise in Pakistan. The growing trend of radicalization and intolerance has particularly affected Hindus, Christians, Ahmedis, Shias and women. Women's vulnerability to gender-based violence has increased as extremist groups reinforce patriarchy by advocating more restrictive norms for them. Sectarian conflict and violence is widespread: 40 per cent of the villages in AAWAZ districts report inter-faith/sectarian conflict or tension. Eighty four percent of villages/settlements in Punjab and 76 percent in KP were reported to have been the scene of inter-faith/sectarian violence in the recent past.⁷ These conflicts result in loss of human life, injuries and disruption of public life, leading to considerable economic losses as well. Domestic violence is, arguably, the most widespread form of conflict: 85 percent of women suffer domestic violence in Pakistan.⁸ Incidents of violence against women are reported to have occurred in 80 percent of AAWAZ villages overall.

AAWAZ recognizes that women and socially excluded groups are often stigmatized as sources of conflict and suffer disproportionately from its consequences. AAWAZ, therefore, places the perspectives and priorities of

⁷ AAWAZ, (2014) Perception Survey.

⁸ Kanwal Qayyum et al, (2013) Domestic Violence Against Women: Prevalence and Men's Perception in PGRN Districts of Pakistan, Rutgers/WPF

women and socially excluded groups at the centre of its work on peace-building and focuses on the pre-emption of domestic violence and inter-faith and sectarian conflict.

AAWAZ believes that there is not enough information on what causes conflict and a better understanding of these issues will help to develop effective strategies to deal with conflict, in its programme area. AAWAZ believes that communities are willing to live in peace and harmony but that the increasing polarization of society has robbed them of the opportunities to get together for a better understanding of each other and to dialogue on issues of common concern. As a result, communities do not have the perspectives, attitudes, tools and opportunities for interaction to enhance peace and harmony in society.

AAWAZ has struggled with several strategies to promote peace. Its first strategy was the creation of Peace Committees with a focus on dispute resolution. However, experience in the initial period shows that the focus of the AAWAZ Peace Committees on dispute resolution led to a tendency to “solve” the dispute even if it was detrimental to the socially excluded or marginalized sections of the population. Furthermore, using informal dispute resolution mechanisms, without increasing the sensitivity of the Peace Committees, also reinforced traditional patriarchal norms. The creation of community mediators was considered but abandoned because of the high cost implications, inefficacy of the cascade model and excessive reliance on community volunteers on a continuing basis.

A second revision in the strategy was to strengthen the formal ADR mechanisms. However, this strategy was quickly revised based on the understanding that these ADR mechanisms had proved ineffective in the past as they were not supported by enforcement mechanisms. Furthermore, most of the formal ADR mechanisms were defunct, in any case, and it would be costly to revive them, without the hope of much actual impact.

Output 2: Pathways to Change

After considerable reflection, the following have been chosen as promising pathways for AAWAZ to pursue:

- ▶ AAWAZ will have maximum impact on peace building by focussing on two critical sources of conflict – inter-faith/ sectarian conflicts and domestic violence.
- ▶ Opportunities for dialogue and interaction among diverse members of the community, and cultural and peace events will promote peace and pre-empt conflict. These events will include peace melas, religious celebrations, cultural and sports events, and will engage local

communities and progressive religious scholars around issues of social cohesion, peace and harmony.

- ▶ Advocacy with key decision-makers and stakeholders at multiple levels (village to national) will help pre-empt sectarian/interfaith conflict on a wide scale.
- ▶ Engagement with youth on non-violence and acceptance of diversity is critical for sustainable peace-building.
- ▶ Awareness-raising through public campaigns on peace and harmony will help to promote acceptance of diversity and peace and lead to positive changes in perceptions, attitudes and practices to increase socially excluded citizen's confidence, capacity and space to access rights.
- ▶ Training on non-violent communication will increase individuals' capacity to resolve conflicts without recourse to violence, and motivate women and men to take action in support of women and socially excluded groups.
- ▶ AAWAZ forum member interventions to protect women and excluded groups at the community level will help to reduce conflicts and tensions.

Actions to Achieve Output 2

- ▶ Dialogues, and cultural and peace events engaging local communities, progressive religious scholars and other stakeholders.
- ▶ Awareness raising sessions and training on non-violent communication based on standardized modules.
- ▶ Campaigns on peace and harmony promoting 'insaniyat' (respect and compassion for all human beings irrespective of gender, religion, class and caste).

Output 3: Women and other excluded groups better able to demand improved delivery of services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

Women and socially excluded citizens have limited access to social sector services and limited recognition of their rights to claim these services. They lack the confidence, knowledge, skills, resources and networks required to undertake advocacy with government duty-bearers to deliver social services. AAWAZ believes that creating forums which represent women and socially excluded groups and preparing village development plans for demanding basic services will promote a culture of collective vision and action in the village. It will also lead to the inclusion of women and other socially excluded groups' voices through their participation in the forums. AAWAZ believes that providing information on processes for registration of demands with government and facilitating meetings with government/political

representatives will mobilize citizens to lobby with the government by equipping them with the specific information they need to register their demands. AAWAZ also believes that active citizens in the village will assume leadership roles in the negotiations with the government. The voices of women and representatives of socially excluded groups will be strengthened through their exposure to, interaction with and opportunities to learn from the more active and informed citizens.

AAWAZ believes that a culture of collective action and responsibility will be built by linking citizens within villages and across villages, UCs and tehsils, thus encouraging a broader vision of social and civic responsibility. AAWAZ believes that effective and sustainable change also requires the inclusion of a range of civil society actors such as NGOs/CBOs, lawyers, social activists, and others. The creation of linked citizen's forums, from the grassroots to the district, allows issues to be aggregated and escalated to different levels of government more rapidly, increases the scope of collective action, and creates supportive networks of citizens. AAWAZ believes that citizens meetings with government representatives, holding of Khuli Katcheries (town hall type open forums) and media engagement, increases government accountability by highlighting unresolved social service issues.

Output 3: Pathways to Change

- ▶ Information on contacts, procedures and use of different advocacy tools through campaigns, forums and Aaghai Centres can help women and socially excluded groups to hold public servants accountable and access services.
- ▶ Discussion of key issues, collection of evidence, and participatory development of action plans regarding public sector service delivery in citizen's forums will enable women and socially excluded citizens to feel more empowered to demand better services.
- ▶ Active citizens will lead advocacy efforts with government but by accompanying them and gaining exposure, more women and socially excluded citizens can develop knowledge, confidence and voice to raise demands.
- ▶ Providing opportunities to forum members to engage with district officials and hold them accountable through different advocacy tools including Khuli Katcheries, media, follow-up visits to Government offices etc. will increase the possibility of citizens' demands being met.

Actions to Achieve Output 3

- ▶ Prepare Village Development Action Plans to support evidence based advocacy.

- ▶ Conduct awareness-raising sessions on how to approach government to articulate demands.
- ▶ Facilitate visits of community members to government offices and promote state citizen engagement and dialogue.
- ▶ Sponsor Khulli Kutcheries which hold public servants accountable for service delivery and grievance redress.
- ▶ Equip Aaghai Centres to provide information to community leaders and socially excluded groups, and train staff through a standardized training module to deal with queries.

Output 4: Improved evidence generated, synthesised and communicated/ championed to political leaders/elites in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

There is not enough evidence on some key aspects of good governance, voice and accountability in Pakistan, which hampers decision-making and key policy and legislative reform.

AAWAZ believes that robust evidence stimulates demand for change; that quality research with a strong evidence base can be used to improve advocacy; and that key decision-makers will be open to policy change and reform based on the evidence provided. It also believes that working directly with poor communities to generate field-level examples, and building the capacity and accountability of intermediate-level civil society helps them to better plan their development strategies. It is also believed that a strong M&E system can help to improve the evidence base and verify the initial assumptions made in the theory of change and selected pathways, as well as help the programme modify its strategies. This in turn ensures that the Programme is cost-effective, efficient and sustainable.

The initial creation of a Programme Analysis, Research and Results (PARR) facility, contracted to synthesise and scale-up evidence from community activities, failed to produce any quality research. The PARR has been replaced with in-house capacity under the Strategic Learning Unit (SLU), which is now responsible for all research and advocacy activities. The SLU is central to ensuring that these activities and outputs complement and reinforce each other. The SLU is responsible for commissioning specialists (eg. lawyers, media) to put pressure on the government for reform.

Output 4: Pathways to Change

- ▶ Use of quality evidence-based policy studies can help to generate credible evidence that can be shared with politicians and decision makers to influence policy reform.

- ▶ Research can be used as the basis of formulating advocacy campaigns to bring about change and reform.
- ▶ Organizations can be strengthened to undertake quality research and advocacy initiatives to inform AAWAZ and other programmes on selected themes.

Actions to Achieve Output 4

- ▶ Quality evidence-based policy studies undertaken.
- ▶ Evidence based findings shared with politicians and decision makers.
- ▶ Advocacy campaigns.
- ▶ Strengthening of organizations to conduct quality research and advocacy.

Theory of Change



