



Access to Justice Initiative

Exposure Visit to Islamabad

20th-22nd July 2009

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Introduction to FIDA

Established in 2004, FIDA is a non-profit, non-government organization registered under the Social Welfare Ordinance of 1961. It is funded mainly by local donors and other partners on a project-to-project basis.

FIDA works primarily in Dera Ismail Khan in the Northwest Frontier Province and South Waziristan in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, taking a long-term approach to development and social change in this region. FIDA aims to act as a bridge between traditional and modern systems of governance and society. While operating conceptually on an 80 to 120 year timeline, FIDA works towards its long-term objectives in measurable 5-year blocks.

FIDA's mission is to mobilize and build the capacity of existing political and social structures and to act as a link between civil society and marginalized communities, thereby empowering all stakeholders to achieve their identified development goals in a sustainable and replicable manner.

Access to Justice Initiative

Project Objectives

- To improve access to justice for the poorest people of the district
- To use the Alternative Dispute Resolution and Mediation as a bridge between the traditional and state legal system

Target Area

- District Dera Ismail Khan
- FR D I Khan
- FR Tank
- South Waziristan Agency

Target Group

The target population includes communities in the remote and rural areas of District D I Khan and FR D I Khan, Tank and South Waziristan Agency, with a focus on Community Counselors. Community Counselors can be defined as:

those men or women in the villages who are active in one or the other way and render their services to the communities free of cost. They may or may not be educated. The services they provide encompass such matters as assisting the co-villagers in issues relating to police stations, courts, or other government departments, providing counseling in time of problems they face, mitigating severity of conflicting situations, acting as arbitrators to solve disputes of the villagers, etc...

Focusing on Community Counselors ensures sustainability of the process since they live with the communities and are always there in times of hardships and happiness. They are available to the communities all the times even at odd hours, which one cannot expect in a formal system of justice.

Activities with the Bar Association

FIDA has established a Legal Information Centre in the District Bar in Dera Ismail Khan. Cases from District Dera Ismail Khan, FR D I Khan, FR Tank and South Waziristan Agency come to the Legal Information Centre where they are counseled and referred to a Legal Committee who may proceed with the cases. The Legal Committee is composed of members of District Bar Association DIK.

Exposure Visit

Justification

- To build the capacity of the Bar Association
- To discuss issues faced by the Bar Association with other bar associations
- To do a comparative analysis of other bar associations
- To expose the Bar Association to good practices
- To discuss rights of district bar association
- To develop linkages
- To interact with senior lawyers

Participants

- Saleem Ullah Khan
- Saif ur Rehman
- Ismail Alizai
- Sana Ullah Shamem
- Farhan Jabeen
- Ahmed Ali
- Muhammad Yousaf
- Shahida Sadozai
- Samin Kanwal
- Shahzia Jabeen
- Naheed Khter
- Rizwan Khan Gandapur
- Zain ul Abidin
- Ali Jan

Activities and Meetings

Islamabad Courts and Bar Association

The capital bar of the country, the Islamabad Bar Association was established in 1980. Since its inception, Islamabad Bar has attracted a large number of practicing lawyers from different parts of the country. With a humble start of just few members, it now boasts over 1500 members.

Islamabad Bar has the distinction of having members from all four provinces of the country and is one of the few bars that has been an active contributor and host of a number of law events,

including International Conferences. The contribution of Islamabad Bar to law making has also been significant and its members continue to put forward suggestions and proposals on different aspects of proposed laws to be enacted by the Parliament.

Meeting with Barrister Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan

Barrister Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan (born September 27, 1941) is a Barrister-at-Law by profession, Senior Advocate Supreme Court, a former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan, and a key leader of the Lawyers' Movement. He is also a writer, human rights activist, politician, former Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Interior, Narcotics Control (1988-1990) and Education. Elected to the Senate of Pakistan in 1994, he eventually succeeded as the leader of the House and the leader of the Opposition between the years 1996 and 1999.

In the wake of 9 March events in Pakistan, barrister Aitzaz Ahsan has become a sign of resistance to anti-democratic moves.¹

Rohi TV Channel

Rohi is a Seraiki TV channel based in Islamabad. Participants in the exposure visit toured the studio and participated in a live program on Rohi. They discussed the law and order situation in District Dera Ismail Khan and other issues of the area.

SHARP Organization

SHARP is a non-governmental organization working in Pakistan for the uplift of human rights in the country. SHARP 's mission is to "strive for a human rights friendly Pakistan."

SHARP was initially assigned registration of the Afghan refugees and non-Afghan asylum seekers in the year 1999 and later on in 2001 when UNHCR started screening of Afghan refugees in NWFP camps, SHARP was selected as a partner for the said program.

Outcome of Visit

Comments from Participants

- We learned to be humble and professional.
- We got up date information about our profession.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aitzaz_Ahsan

- These types of visits should be continued in future because in this way we are linked with other bar associations and we learn more.
- We appreciate the efforts of Faiysal Alikhan for the development of DI Khan.
- It is nice exposure visit we gain more knowledge about burning problems of the country.
- It is great honor for us to meet with Aitzaz Ahsan.
- It is great honor to get advice from Aitzaz Ahsan.
- We appreciate FIDA for arrangement of meeting with Aitzaz Ahsan.
- We got extraordinary knowledge about lawyer's movement and bar association.
- Rohi channel is a very good platform for sharing about the law and order situation of DIK.
- We will try to promote the standard of professionalism.
- Being activists, we will try to help the poor people.

Photographs



