**Minutes of Joint Networking Meeting**

**Of**

**Dastageer Legal Aid Center-Sanjog, Lahore**

**Under**

**Access to Justice for Vulnerable Populations in Pakistan Project**

Minutes of the Joint Network meeting held on 13th May, 2015, at Milestone Office, Lahore to share the progress update of the center and follow-up after the previous meeting.

**Background:**

The basic purpose of Joint Networking Meetings is to promote and support developing partnerships and expanding networks among Dastageer Legal Aid Center (DLAC) Sanjog, Lahore, Rights Based Organizations and other relevant stakeholders of the district. The interaction will ensure collaboration, coordination and establishing networks for workers of human rights.

**Participants of the Meeting:**

1. Aroon Kumar (Focal person, Pakistan Hindu Council)
2. Amarnaath Randhawa (President, Hindu Sudhaar Sabha, Lahore,

Pakistan)

1. Ameet Kumar (Youth coordinator, Hindu Sudhaar Sabha,

Lahore, Pakistan)

1. Gul Hassan Abbas (Center Coordinator, DLAC, Sanjog)
2. Nabila Feroz (Liaison officer, Sanjog )
3. Hafiza Zahida (Counselor, DLAC-Sanjog, Lahore)
4. Anam Shehzadi (Coordinator, Milestone, Lahore)
5. Shimza Tasleem (Coordinator Attendant, Milestone, Lahore)
6. Muhammad Afzal Khurram (Advocate, Sanjog)
7. Shafiq ur Rehman (Milestones)
8. Rizwan Ijaz (Milestones)
9. Malik Khurram (M&E officer, INP)
10. Zahid (Attendant, Milestone, Lahore)
11. Usman (Member Milestone, Lahore)
12. Kamran Yousaf (Sec. communication, Milestone, Lahore)
13. Mary Gill (MPA-PMLN)
14. Jufincila Riaz (Project officer, World council of religions)
15. Ihsan Nadir (Program coordinator, World council of religions)
16. Sho Saito (President, Sakura wheel chair project, Japan)
17. Masauii Morgami (Project manager, JIL, Japan)

**Agenda of the Meeting:**

Following agenda items were discussed in the meeting:

**Agenda Item 1:** Progress updates and Future Action Plan

**Agenda Item 2:** Rights of PWDs by Delegation of Japan Council of Independent Living

**Agenda Item 3:** Discussion

**Agenda Item 4:** Action Points for future meeting

**Meeting Progress/ Key Discussion Points**

The details of the deliberations are as follows:

**Agenda Item 1:** Progress Update by Dastageer Legal Aid Center (DLAC), Lahore

1. The meeting was initiated with a formal introduction of all the participants and sharing the purpose of the meeting. Thereafter, a follow-up on action points of the previous meeting was discussed. A formal presentation regarding the services of DLAC center and its update progress was also shared with the participants.
2. On an inquiry from Program Coordinator, World Council of Religions, Ihsan Nadir, an overview of the procedure for provision of legal assistance and court cases was given.

**Agenda Item 2& 3:** Rights of PWDs by Delegation of Japan Council of Independent Living &

1. A delegation of Japan Independent Living formally participated in the meeting and briefed about the situation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) living in Japan. Ms. Sho Saito, also shared the different disabilities prevailing in Japan. She informed that PWDs in Japan face many problems similar to Pakistan but the extent of discrimination is less.
2. A brief history on the struggle for the rights of PWDs and as a result of these efforts the formulation and passing of a law to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability was also shared with the participants. The law explicitly states that “it is not legal to discriminate persons with disabilities”.
3. In the year 2014, JIL started a project to protect persons with disabilities from neglect and abuse. They developed a helpline where people can call whenever and wherever they observe neglect or abuse towards persons with disabilities. In this regard, several measures been planned to protect them.
4. On a question from PML MNA, Mary Gil, about the kinds of obstacles faced by JIL themselves, during their efforts, Sho Saito replied that an activist would probably answer the question in a better manner. As per her knowledge, their organization had to go through several hurdles while going for the elimination of discrimination, especially on the on the government level.
5. Nabila Feroz, Laison Officer, Sanjog added that all the countries who have ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities need to take measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability and the governments should be held accountable in case of violations.
6. Shafiqur Rehman, President MILESTONE talked about the economical benefits of the elimination of discrimination associated with persons with disabilities. He further emphasized, that keeping aside the physical disability, if the real potential of PWDs is utilized, it will be beneficial for the economy as a whole. It was further stressed that millions of dollars have been spent to establish an institution for special children, however if inclusive education is promoted and work on accessibility of academic institutions, most of the children with physical disability may be able to access and study this money can be utilized for other measures.
7. On a question on how to get out of the serious situation, Shafiq ur Rehman highlighted the need “**to make all the academic institutes, banks, courts and other relevant departments accessible**”.
8. At the end of the meeting it was shared with the participants that a mapping of the organizations working in the district Lahore and the services provided will also be developed to be available for information sharing and synergizing efforts. This will also serve as a referral service directory.
9. It was also shared that the name, ToRs and Charter of Justice will be finalized in the next meeting.

**Agenda Item 4:** Action Points for future meetings

* Following actions points were devised for the next meeting:

**Action Points:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Action(s) Required | Responsibility |
| Name of Justice Cluster/ Group | DLAC Lahore |
| Charter of Justice |  |

1. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks.