Minutes of Joint Networking Meeting

SYCOP, Muzaffargarh

Minutes of the Joint Network meeting held on 17th February, 2015 at SYCOP Office Muzaffargarh to share the progress update of the center with other Rights Based Organization (CBOs) and discuss and develop ways to increase and strengthen coordination and collaboration among these organizations within the district.

Background

Dastageer Legal Aid Center Muzaffargarh is being run by SYCOP in partnership with The Asia Foundation and Insaf Network Pakistan (INP) to provide legal aid and victim assistance to vulnerable population of District Muzaffargarh, particularly ethnic & religious minorities, survivors of gender based violence (GBV) and persons with disabilities. Services offered by Dastageer Legal Aid Center Muzaffargarh include face-to-face and telephonic counseling, referral services, court appearance in relation to the case filed.

The purpose of the meeting is to increase coordination among the major stakeholders of the project in the district.

**Participants of the Meeting**

Following participated in the meeting:-

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| # | Name | Organization/Department |
|  | Mahar Ghulam Abbas | Sanjh Pakistan |
|  | Sarwat Bukhari | World Vision International |
|  | Mubeen Batool | World Vision International |
|  | Misbah Naureen | NRSP |
|  | Humaria Yasmeen | NRSP |
|  | Saveer Ahmed Khan | Zia Welfare Council |
|  | Rasheed Ahmed Khan Sherwani | Chairman District Coordination Council NGOs |
|  | Rana Muhammad Afzal | District ULMA & MASHAIKH AMAN Committee |
|  | Hafiz Muhammad Akbar Naqash | Idara Adab-o-Saqafat |
|  | Muhammad Afzal Chohan | District ULMA & MASHAIKH AMAN Committee |
|  | Aamer Ibrahim | Sukh Development |
|  | Malik Fayyaz Awan | Alflah Organization |
|  | Qaiser Abbas | Anjuman Tameer-e- Watan |
|  | Hadayat Pal Masih, Advocate | Advocate/Minority Activist |
|  | Rashid Ahmed Khan Dasti | Panel Lawyer |
|  | Mehboob Alam | PODA |
|  | Usman Zahoor | INP |
|  | Malik Khurram | INP |
|  | Khalid Mehmood Mirza | KDO |
|  | Rashid Latif | Idara Taleem-o-Agahi |
|  | M. Khalilullah | Glorious Vision Organization |
|  | Muhammad Shoaib | Glorious Vision Organization |
|  | Muhammad Ikhlaq Ahmed | Anjuman Tameer-e-Watan |
|  | Muhammad Ismail Tahir Seyal | Principal Coordinator SYCOP |
|  | Muhammad Ismail Malik | Coordinator DLAC |
|  | Rana Faryad | Executive Director City Channel |

Agenda of the Meeting:

Following agenda items were discussed in the meeting:

**Agenda Item 1:** Progress Update by DLAC

**Agenda Item 2:** Improve/ increase coordination among Rights Based Organizations in District on Access to Justice Project

**Agenda Item 3:** Strengthening Referral Mechanism

**Agenda Item 4:** Issues/ Challenges of organizations working on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Minorities and GBV and suggestions to overcome them

**Agenda Item 5:** Charter of Justice for Protecting Rights

**Agenda Item 6:** Action Points for future meetings

**Key Discussion Points:**

**Agenda Item 1:**

* **Progress Update by DLAC**

Muhammad Ismail Malik, Coordinator DLAC Muzaffargarh gave detailed presentation on progress and update of the DLAC.

He briefed that DLAC Muzaffargarh is providing legal aid and victim assistance to vulnerable populations particularly religious and ethnic minorities, survivors of Gender based Violence (GBV) and persons with disabilities in district Muzaffargarh. Services offered by DLAC include face-to-face and telephonic counseling, referral services, legal aid assistance to clients, facilitating clients to access law enforcement agencies and to make court appearances in relation to the cases filed.

**Agenda Item 2:**

* **Improve/increase coordination among Rights Based Organizations in District on Access to Justice Project**

The participants suggested to conduct such meetings on monthly bases to improve/increase coordination among rights based organization in the district on Access to Justice Project. In addition to community the meetings to be convened at Tehsil level.

Qaiser Abbas from Anjuman Tameer Millat (CBO) suggested that awareness session on Access to Justice and introduction of DLAC should be delivered in his rural/village community by the DLAC. It was also discussed that these network meetings should be held at community level in all union councils. The participants suggested to change/ rotate the meeting venue.

Mahar Ghulam Abbas from Sanjh Pakistan suggested that this network should also be updated on SMS as a Mobile Group and all update of Access to Justice Project shared with the group through email as well.

**Agenda Item 3:**

* **Strengthening Referral Mechanism**

Rashid Ahmed Khan Sherwani, Chairman District Coordination Council NGOs recommended that DLAC should also remain in contact with those organizations that are working on women rights especially. Muhammad Ismail Tahir Seyal, Principal Coordinator SYCOP also participated in the event and re-iterated that coordination should extend to all other service provider like Police Department, Education Department, and Bar Association. The meeting with Bar may be convened in Bar Room so that other lawyers of Bar may participate in the event and support the work of DLAC.

The participants also requested that referral directory developed and maintained by DLAC to be shared with this network members.

**Agenda Item 4:**

* **Issues/ Challenges of organizations working on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Minorities and GBV and suggestions to overcome them**

Following issue/challenges are facing by the organizations working on rights of persons with disabilities, minorities and GBV (as highlighted in the meeting):-

* + Minority’s community (especially Christian) is not ready to come in the court due to their own PANCHAYT or JIRGA system.
  + GBV cases not reported to concerned department due to cultural barriers.
  + Persons with disabilities face marginalization and significant barriers to the full realization of their rights and to their inclusion in society and development.

The participants recommended that awareness on the rights of Women, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities and orientation on access to justice system will result in reduction of these issues/challenges.

**Agenda Item 5:**

* **Charter of Justice for Protecting Rights**

For the development ofJustice Cluster of the district and developing a charter of justice, it was agreed upon to work on the following:

* Awareness on fundamental rights and access to justice project at community level including schools.
* Lawyers’ network for legal aid
* Joint venture with District Legal Empowerment Committee
* Wide promotion of fundamental rights at prominent places like Main Bazar, District Court and Police stations etc. through IEC material
* Appreciation of individuals from law enforcement agencies for good performance.

**Action Points:**

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| --- | --- |
| **Action(s) Required** | **Responsibility** |
| Share the update of Access to Justice Project and DLAC Muzaffargarh | Coordinator DLAC Muzaffargarh |
| All network members to be updated through regular SMS as a Mobile Group | Coordinator DLAC Muzaffargarh |
| The organizations of the network will introduce themselves to other networks/organizations for strengthening referral mechanism of DLAC | All Network Members |
| DLAC will inform organizations at least one week before the convening of next meeting so that it may be arranged at another organization’s location. | Coordinator DLAC Muzaffargarh |

**Conclusion:**

All the participants thanked INP and DLAC Muzaffargarh for arranging the current network meeting and assured of their complete support for DLAC Muzaffargarh and close coordination. The meeting was concluded with a vote of thanks to the participants and a quote “T**his is not the end, this is the start for access to justice for vulnerable populations of District Muzaffargarh”**.

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