



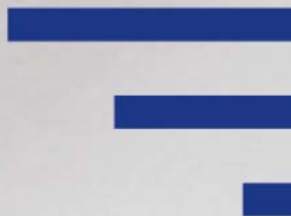
■ Youth

■ as Agents

■ for Change

**FRIEDRICH
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Youth as Agents for Change



Youth as Agents for Change

A documentation of the
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's youth
programs in Afghanistan, Pakistan
and Sri Lanka

Humaira Sadeqyar

**FRIEDRICH
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STIFTUNG**

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Humaira Sadeqyar

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Fore word

Young people are integral to a society's development. The stability and sustainability of a state can only be ensured by engaging youth and making them equal partners in design and development. Friedrich Ebert's statement "Democracy needs democrats" is an appeal in this direction and highlights the importance of involving and promoting young people and young professionals - who are our investment for the future. Youth and their concerns are, therefore, central to FES's work in national and international cooperation.

In South Asia, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung runs several youth programs, focusing on the different needs and challenges of youth in each respective country.

In **Afghanistan**, the 'Young Leaders Forum' (YLF) was initiated in 2004 and concentrates on outstanding youth in different spheres of life, their capacity building and their role in society. With that forum, FES wants to empower young leaders to take over responsibility in their society and encourage civil society in Afghanistan. The overall aim of the program has been to devise, strengthen and support a 'Young Leaders Forum' in Afghanistan, working on 'Peace and conflict transformation', 'Understanding democracy' and 'Social development in Afghanistan'.

The program not only focuses on the capacity building of the young women and men, but also helps the trained young leaders to disseminate their knowledge and relate their experience to other youth groups. In the long term this will lead to the creation of an effective youth network across the country, where both men and women from different ethnic groups are sharing their experiences. The work in the last years has been very successful, as several members of the forum have already taken over leading positions in government and civil society.

One of the most outstanding programmes of the recent past was the support of **Pakistan's** transition to democracy by facilitating increased political participation and establishing a critical dialogue between political parties and the general public. A 'Young Professionals Network' (YPN) supported by FES provides highly committed youth from disadvantaged areas with an opportunity to participate in national and international debates, receive need-based training and get prepared to assume political and social responsibility in a modern society while observing the fundamental values of humanity and democracy

In **Sri Lanka**, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is encouraging the participation of youth in the political and decision-making processes and has published several valuable researches and comparative studies on youth to address and assess their challenges and responses with regard to the democratization process in the country.

The current publication, published by the FES-Afghanistan Office, is documenting the FES programs for youth in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and introduces successful, competent and highly motivated young women and men who have participated in FES youth initiatives in the region and have brought about changes in their respective societies.

Dr. Beate Bartoldus,
Head, Department for Asia and the Pacific
FES-Head Office
Bonn, 29th November, 2007



FES Head Offices in Berlin and Bonn

**About the
Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation**



Friedrich Ebert, Germany's first democratically elected president

The Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation

The Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) was founded in 1925 as a political legacy of Germany's first democratically elected president, Friedrich Ebert.

Ebert, a social democrat from a humble crafts background who had risen to hold the highest political office in his country, in response to his own painful experience in political confrontation had proposed the establishment of a foundation to serve the following aims:

- furthering the political and social education of individuals from all walks of life in the spirit of democracy and pluralism,
- facilitating access to university education and research for gifted young people by providing scholarships and
- contributing to international understanding and cooperation.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation which was banned by the Nazis in 1933 and re-established in 1947, continues today to pursue these aims in all its extensive activities.

As a private cultural non-profit institution, it is committed to the ideas and basic values of social democracy.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation is part of the network of German political foundations. Its main areas of activities today are:

In Germany:

- Civic education programmes inside Germany
- Research and scientific analysis in central policy areas
- Organisation of dialogue and interchange between social and political actors, such creating a space for deliberative democracy within Germany's political system
- Scholarships for students studying at German universities

Outside of Germany:

The FES has over 80 offices and maintains programs and activities in over 100 countries on the earth. Its network of offices is one of the most important non-governmental global infrastructures for democracy promotion and international dialogue on central topics of international politics, globalization and the economic, social and political development in the world.

Development Cooperation

The Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) maintains its own representations in 70 countries of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. 70 German staff are posted in these countries at present and - with the assistance of numerous local staff – are engaged in projects in the fields of socio-political development and economic promotion.

The FES spends approximately half of its annual budget on international activities. Its partners come from politics, business, associations, trade unions, academia, and also from communication sector and cultural institutions.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation sees its activities in the developing countries as a contribution to:

- promoting peace and understanding between peoples and inside its partner countries,
- supporting the democratization of state and society and strengthening civil society,
- improving general political, economic and social conditions,
- reinforcing free trade unions,
- developing independent media structures,
- facilitating regional and worldwide cooperation between states and different

- interest groups and gaining recognition for human rights.

FES in South Asia

Among the foundation's key objectives in Asia are the promotion of democratic development, the realization of social justice as well as crisis prevention and international dialogue.

Parliamentary democracy, the protection of human rights, a free press, the separation of powers, and soundly based rule of law are not simply western values and principles only. The democratic forces in Asia share these precepts. The FES promotes programs and activities aimed at establishing and strengthening civil society and reinforcing democratic government institutions. Special emphasis is put on contributing to a peaceful resolution of matters concerning different interested parties and on building bridges between civil society and the powers of the state.

To achieve these aims, the FES cooperates with a diverse number of governmental institutions, local representations, trade unions, political parties, social movements, Non Governmental Organizations, the media as well as academic institutions.

In the south Asian countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, following the aforementioned aims, the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation also focuses on youth as potential agents to further participate in socio-political as well as economical initiatives and activities to ensure a democratic future for the region.

The current publication is an effort to document the FES youth activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The publication encompasses the FES youth projects and programs in the target countries as well as introducing some successful faces out of many, who have participated so far in the FES youth initiatives in their respective countries.

The publication has been provided by the FES-Afghanistan office with close contribution of the FES-Pakistan and FES-Sri Lanka offices.



Young Leaders Forum, Afghanistan

The FES youth activities in Afghanistan



Some members of the Young Leaders Forum

The FES youth activities in Afghanistan

The Afghanistan office of Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation has initiated two separate projects for Afghan youth:

1. The Young Leaders Forum (YLF)
2. The Young Journalists Network (YJN)

The Young Leaders Forum

Background

After the Petersberg Agreement in Bonn, Germany in December 2001, Afghanistan started to take steps in the path of peace, democratization and reconstruction process. Within this new atmosphere, there was a big need of youth integration to the whole process felt. On the other hand, with half of the Afghan population of 30 million people younger than 18 years old, working with youth has turned to a political necessity.

In early 2004, as an initiative by FES-Afghanistan Office, the **Young Leaders Forum(YLF)** was formed. At first, the Forum consisted of 12 bright youth initially from Kabul, which were trained to learn how to become outstanding leaders of the Afghan society. Later on the forum also started to extend its activities to other provinces across the country.

Members of the 'Young Leaders Forum', preferably from different ethnic groups and both sexes, started to first learn to live with each other peace-

fully and in harmony. They were required to prove good leaders and efficient and prominent personalities, thus a good example for other youths in their surroundings. In a second step, they got exposed to other youth networks as well as different international events in the region and beyond to further boost international understanding, peaceful integration and regional support for peace and non-violence in South and Central Asia.

After the project was initiated in early 2004, it has held four selection terms called assessment centres, through which it has gradually expanded to include more participants which is now exceeding a hundred. The youngest generation was selected in April 2007.

The 'Young Leaders Forum' successfully continued in 2005 and 2006 with more engaging discussions, conferences and seminars mainly focusing on Afghanistan's social and political issues. In 2007, the project further expanded and around thirty motivated young Afghans out of two hundred applicants managed to open their way inside the 'Young Leaders Forum'.

In addition to its regular activities, the new group of Young Leaders took a firm step to move out of the capital Kabul and extend YLF training activities to other parts of the country. They managed to multiply and deliver their knowledge, skills and experiences in the fields of conflict management, negotiation and rhetoric to hundreds of motivated youth across the eastern, northern and western parts of the country.

Aim and objectives of the Young Leaders Forum

The overall aim of this project is to devise, strengthen and support a 'Young Leaders Forum' in Afghanistan that will work for peace, conflict transformation, understanding democracy and social development in Afghanistan. The main focus is on the capacity building of the participants and later on, turning them to multipliers reflecting their skills, knowledge and experiences to other active youth across the country.

The main objectives behind the YLF project are as follows:

1. To help build the capacity of the members of

YLF in issues such as conflict transformation, peace building, cooperation, human rights, democracy, leadership, social development as well as regional and international understanding.

2. To provide the members of the forum with an environment of trust and freedom which will help them develop and exchange their ideas and learn from each other's experiences.
3. To help the members of YLF formulate objectives and plans of interventions in their own communities by providing them with advice as well as technical and moral backing.
4. To help connect the members of YLF with other young people or youth forums on a regional level.
5. To contribute to the formulation and strengthening of a solid Youth Network on regional level which will help lay the foundations of integration, cooperation, democracy and understanding in the region.

Activities

The YLF project mainly consists of six distinguished types of activities as following:

Capacity building trainings on leadership, communication, negotiation, conflict management, event management and moderation skills.

Discussion forums with experts from different institutions such as government, Parliament and civil society organizations to debate and discuss over different social, political and economical subjects and issues concerning Afghanistan.

Provincial activities inside the country, to disseminate Young Leaders' skills and experiences to other youth in different provinces and to pave the way for formation of a broader network of active and motivated youth across the country. YLF trainings have also included university students and even university lecturers as in November 2007, a group of YLF trainers trained more than 20 lecturers of the Kabul Educational University in the HARVARD concept of negotiation and conflict management.

Exposure visits to both regional events as well as international events mainly in Europe to provide participants with opportunities to observe and learn particularly about other youth organizations and movements and the way they work. For instance, a group of 11 male and female partici-

nants from YLF went on a study trip to Germany in 2005. During their stay in Germany, the group met with youth activists from different fields such as media, politics, education and social work. They also met with young members of the Bundestag, the German Parliament.

Organizing conferences and seminars to address important social and political issues in the country, such as the conference on youths and elections, for the young candidates and voters of the Parliamentary elections 2005. The conference was held in August 2005 and its overall aim was to rise the awareness of both young candidates and voters of the Parliamentary elections 2005 to persuade them actively participate and effectively vote in the mentioned Parliamentary elections.

Members of the Young Leaders Forum

Regular members of the 'Young Leaders Forum' are coming from different contexts such as universities, governmental institutions, Parliament, political parties, civil society and non-governmental organizations. The only tie which brings them all together with their different backgrounds is their motivation to learn, practice and improve themselves as well as their commitment to effectively participate in different aspects of the overall change process in their society.

Achievements and general impact

With providing an open atmosphere for its participants to independently express their different ideas and views and becoming able to tolerate

Young candidates to enter YLF, Assessment Center





Young Leaders with students of Kabul Polytechnic University

each other, the 'Young Leaders Forum' has demonstrated overall, a very harmonized and democratic example of the diverse Afghan society.

Quite a few members of the 'Young Leaders Forum' have been promoted to high positions in Afghanistan's new democratic institutions.

Some other members of the YLF project have got studying opportunities, internships and scholarships to further study abroad and get better professional on their careers.

Another group of YLF members have turned to committed multipliers of skills they have learned in the forum to other youth from eastern to northern and western parts of Afghanistan. They mainly organize and conduct training workshops on conflict management, negotiation, communication and rhetoric skills and have already covered hundreds of active youth in the mentioned parts of the country.

With the efforts of some members of the 'Young Leaders Forum', it has now connected to the FES initiative of the 'Young Leaders Training Program' in Madagascar through a Google group on line.

Counting all these success points, the 'Young Leaders Forum' has been now recognized as a group of committed youth across the country as well as beyond the borders.

Challenges of FES youth activities in Afghanistan

As most of other development efforts, the 'Young Leaders Forum' has been mainly based in the capital, Kabul. Among other reasons, one is the growing insecurity in some parts of the country, which has played a major role in preventing YLF from organizing activities in the affected areas.

Successful stories

Bahram Rahman

23 years old, male
Senior student at the Kabul
Medical University
Press Assistant to the Italian
Newspaper Il Foglio in
Afghanistan



Mr. Bahram Rahman was selected to the 'Young Leaders Forum' in April 2007. His strong interests in learning how to become a good leader, to join an active network of Afghan youth as well as to open his way in attending socio-political events took him to YLF. He is also a board member of the YLF newsletter.

Being a member of YLF he;

- particularly learned about leadership and communication skills and good conflict management methods,
- became more self-confident and more social in behaviour and
- got the big lesson that a group could always do better than an individual alone.

In addition to his studies at the medical university and part time work for the Italian newspaper, Il Foglio, Bahram is now organizing and conducting professional training workshops on rhetoric, communication, negotiation and conflict management skills for young Afghans, students as well as lecturers of universities.

Bahram says...

"After six months in the FES Youth Program, my life turned to a positive pave of success and self-confidence. I was a student setting in the class, very silent and lost to find my vision and see my future. But, I found it and turned to be one of the trainers of the FES Youth Program conducting workshops in different provinces of Afghanistan."

Sayed Asef Hossaini

27 years old, male

Senior student of the Faculty of Sociology and Philosophy at Kabul University

Poet and Editor for “Mah-o-Hoor” website, a Dari literature website



Mr. Asef Hossaini was selected to the 'Young Leaders Forum' in June 2005. His thirst for learning more management skills as a young politician, to make friendly and realistic relationship with people and to share his opinions with other young leaders opened his path to YLF.

Inside the 'Young Leaders Forum', Asef learned very practical skills of management and leadership from experienced trainers. By attending YLF meetings he also found out more about Afghan society, he has learned logical ways to discuss about complicated and risky issues of Afghanistan society and now he thinks he is capable to easily establish friendly relationship with people.

On behalf of YLF, Mr. Hossaini participated to the international conference titled “Dealing with a Burdened Past—Transitional Justice and Democratization” in April 2006 in Germany.

He was the youngest candidate for the Parliamentary elections in 2005. Asef believes that this elections was a good opportunity for him to put all what he learned in YLF, into action and according to him, this Parliamentary elections was his YLF on the streets and in real life. He believes that the communication, leadership and management skills he learned in YLF, all played a great positive role in running his elections' campaign in terms of establishing good relationships with different people, advocating for youth rights and their participation into decision making processes.

Asef has documented all his impressions and experiences while campaigning during the Parliamentary elections 2005 in the form of a publication, which is one of the rare documentaries left on that elections.

Asef says...

“FES youth project has helped Afghan youth to promote their own self-confidence. Therefore, it raised the participation of youth in important and serious political, cultural and social issues as the effective members of the Afghan society.”

International Conference on Transitional Justice,
FES Head Office, Berlin, April 2006



Aazita Rafat

30 years old, female
Member of the Lower House
of the Afghanistan National
Assembly



Ms. Aazita Rafat joined the 'Young Leaders Forum' in June 2005. Her motivation to share ideas on different socio-political issues of the country with Afghan youth as well as to take youth voices and views to the National Assembly opened her way to the YLF.

Aazita is currently part of a youth caucus in the lower house of the Afghan National Assembly where she is strongly involved in considering youth related issues and their problems and strongly campaigns for appropriate solutions for them on a daily basis.

While being a member of the 'Young Leaders Forum', she found particularly the discussion forums on topics related to Afghanistan's current politics and social issues very beneficial and practical. Discussion forums over the achievements and challenges of the Afghan Parliament, electoral systems in Afghanistan, corruption and security provided her with unique opportunities to share her ideas with other motivated young leaders. This let her get a very multi-faceted, enriched overall picture of the democratization and peace process as well as challenges standing in front of them in her country. Sharing different opinions on such a variety of socio-political issues turned her to be a very open-minded and forward-looking bridge between the National Assembly and active young Afghans in the society.

Nevertheless, Aazita has strong ties with her constituency in north-western province of Badghis and consistently lobbies for the problems of her people in the lower house of the National

Assembly. Aazita has also initiated an independent youth organization in her province which encompasses a group of motivated young activists working to improve youth conditions and gender discrimination particularly among youth in Badghis. This group has just issued their first publication on youth and development issues and are going to distribute it all over the country to motivate other young Afghans to take same steps and play a far influential role in their community development. Aazita is strongly trying to bridge the Young Leaders Forum to this locally initiated youth set up to extend YLF activities to Badghis Province.

Aazita says..

“The Young Leaders Forum has been one of the best ways to further strengthen understanding and unity among Afghan youth as it has helped opening windows between youth from the provinces and youth from the capital to sharing their ideas, problems and challenges.”

The Young Journalists Network

After its great experience with the 'Young Leaders Forum' in 2007, FES-Afghanistan has developed a concept to initiate a network of young journalists to address the big need for developing quality democratic media in Afghanistan.

Afghan Young Journalists specially lack professional trainings and exchanges with each other and in different regions of Afghanistan. FES-Afghanistan will run workshops by professional foreign journalists and offer exchange-opportunities via web-platform for young journalists across Afghanistan. With this network the young journalists can be also enabled to cooperate closely with young journalists from abroad.

On one-year perspective the FES-Afghanistan will realise:

1. building up a network of more than 100 young journalists under 30 years in Afghanistan, first about a mailinglist and afterwards about web-portal,
2. eight one-day-workshops with foreign journalists for around 15 – 20 young Afghan journalists on topics like journalistic styles, investigative journalism, blogs, Pod Casts, and building up their own newspaper,
3. internships, study-visits and exchange programs for young journalists with foreign and particularly regional countries' media companies,
4. the first 'Young Journalists Award' for print, radio, TV and online media in Afghanistan with celebration afterwards.

FES-Afghanistan has already started to realize the above mentioned steps with co-operation of its professional partner, 'Nai, supporting free media in Afghansitan' and will continue to complete the whole project in 2008.



International youth conference on MDGs in Sep. 2006 in Islamabad

The FES youth activities in Pakistan



International youth conference on MDGs in Sep. 2006 in Islamabad

The FES youth activities in Pakistan

The FES-Pakistan Office has initiated two separate projects for youth in Pakistan:

1. The Young Professionals Network (YPN)
2. The Youth Parliament

The Young Professionals Network (YPN)

Background and objectives

Since its presence in Pakistan, FES has been working with labour force (which also includes youth). Lately, following the mandate of Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, the FES-Pakistan felt a need to play its role in providing capacity building and awareness to Pakistan youth by involving them in the discussion and implementation of policies relevant to Pakistani society in general and youth in particular.

Therefore, FES-Pakistan conceptualized a project called 'Young Professionals Network' (YPN), through which it started targeting young professionals in the country, which continued from June 2004 until the end of 2007. YPN has five sub-groups in all provinces of Pakistan including two in Sindh, one in North West Frontier Province, one in Baluchistan and one in Punjab.

The project aims at empowering the promising youth from relatively deprived areas of Pakistan

to provide them a platform to learn and also to discuss various socio-economic and political issues of Pakistan as well as of South Asia. It also aims at providing productive opportunities to Pakistani youth to interact with their age-fellows from other countries in South Asia and discuss bilateral and regional issues. In brief, the main objectives of the YPN project are as following:

- Foster social permeability / social integration
- Empowerment of youth
- Raising awareness
- Decentralization / knowledge transfer to local communities
- Regional co-operation
- Future co-operation partners for FES

Activities

Leadership Development Training Program:

Members of the YPN were trained with twelve module leadership development training program on communication, presentation, time management, event management, moderation, leadership, vision, self discipline & confidence, creativity & innovation, team & team building, conflict management and networking skills.

Civic & Political Education Orientation

Program: Four modules offered on:

1. Political Education, political theories, role of transparency in public functions
1. National & International social movements
3. Pakistan : State & Society
4. Pakistan : System of Governance

Awareness: Members are required to share all the knowledge they gather in monthly meetings / trainings to disseminate to their own localities like colleges, universities or offices.

Trainings at National Levels: To enhance the capacity building of Young Professionals. An example is the ten days conference in Ayubia, Pakistan on Millennium Development Goals where 30 participants were invited from 7 countries of South Asia plus Iran and Afghanistan.

Trainings at International Level: For instance, four members of YPN went to Kabul in



Young Professionals Network in Quetta, Pakistan

December 2004 to participate in a conference titled Youth & Globalization and five other members went to India in May 2005 to participate in a youth conference.

Members of the Young Professionals Network

Members of the YPN are young professionals, aged between 20-30 years and coming from areas having:

- limited access to education and information,
- limited access to networks of the establishment,
- less socio-political and cultural environment that permits individual advancement and
- little or less discussion of differing opinions.

The program covered overall 60 young Pakistanis.

Achievements and general impact

Members of the YPN have been equipped with leadership skills, political and civic education and some have already shown leadership capabilities by taking unique initiatives.

The program has contributed in harmonizing Pakistani society through youth, though at a very small scale.

Some members of YPN have taken notable initiatives like:

1. Formation of the Human Development Organization in Dir district, Pakistan. The main objectives of the organization are to work for the betterment of youth of Dir through capacity building and advocacy.
2. Some motivated members of YPN in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) had a contract with Action-aid, Peshawar Office to conduct a series of trainings on:
 - Networking of the university youth
 - Internalization of leadership and development training (training university students in leadership and development)
 - Awareness campaign through students about Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
 - Short sessions in the university about different development issues like women rights, local government, etc.

The program has contributed to forming a more vibrant, active and motivated bunch of youth in different parts of Pakistan committed to work hard for the betterment of their society through social awareness and political education and playing the role of multipliers.

Challenges

Contact and relations with other youth networks and organizations were minimal.

The YPN experience shows that at times, the volunteerism is not very much evident from the members.

It was felt that at times, it was only FES cup of tea. More stakeholders need to be involved in future plans.

FES-Pakistan is working to infuse new blood into the existing groups. Although some efforts were there but it actually failed to induct new energetic faces in the group due to certain reasons like the integrity of the group, their level of understanding

and issues for the new comers.

Perspectives of FES youth activities in Pakistan

As YPN project almost comes to an end, FES-Pakistan is planning to continue its youth activities in the future with a selected group of trade unionists to provide them with leadership skills and empower them to assume their roles as future leaders of the work force.

FES-Pakistan takes into consideration if charges might strengthen and turn initiatives like YPN into real stakeholders.

Some YPN members after a leadership training in Sukkur, Paki-



Successful stories

Fayaz Ahamad

**30 years old, male
PGD in Development
Economics**



Wishing to work for development of youth and to rise public awareness about political education, social and moral ethics opened his way to the FES youth project.

The 'Young Professionals Network' changed Fayaz's attitude of individual learning to collective learning and enhanced his capacity as he has been selected as resource person for imparting training to youth on different topics. The project also helped him a lot in realization of his responsibilities as being a citizen of the country and the change youth can bring in their country.

Mr. Favaz has been selected as anchor person for the international workshop on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Berlin, Germany in 2005. Similarly he was the one whose proposal with the name of the 'Asia Europe Youth Network' was recommended during the same workshop and then he successfully launched its web page up till now.

Fayaz says...

"I personally feel that after working with FES youth project, I am now able to overcome my shortcomings, which were unknown to me. Before, I was not able to talk to even my family members, but now I am able to discuss issues with many people without feeling any hesitation. After working with FES youth project, I will simply say I was awakened from a very deep sleep and I got to know that being a young citizen, I can bring so many changes in the society. While working with the youth project, I came across many young students who used to become frustrated and the reason was that they were not aware of their capacities, potential and energy. After doing some kind of counselling, many of them changed their minds and joined different societies in the university."

Hameed ul Mehdi

31 years old, male
Master in Administration
Sciences and Pakistan Studies



Hameed wanted to get to the youth network for gaining knowledge and personal capacity building in social and political activities. Besides all, his desire to utilize his abilities for the betterment of the society he lives in, was a strong motivation to take his steps to the FES youth project.

While being a member of the 'Young Professionals Network',

- Mehdi realized the essence of a vibrant civil society
- He gained very good communication and presentation skills and better personal exposure.
- He came to know about international youth related events that have provided him very good platform for confidence building, knowledge sharing, volunteerism, and interaction with the international community.

As a member of YPN,

- Mehdi has conducted trainings on management, volunteerism, MDGs and HIV-awareness meeting for youth in his community.
- Together with the YPN Quetta group, he has planted trees in the suburb area of Quetta and organized a free medical camp.
- Mehdi has also initiated a monthly English newsletter with the name of CALL in Quetta with some professionals and freelance journalists.

Mehdi says...

"I am more confident and self-assured person now. YPN has given me a sense of ownership and belongingness to my own country. I am more concerned about our socio-political situation than before. I got better understanding of social and political structures in the country. The trainings and interaction around Pakistan provided me good platform for knowledge sharing and connectivity with other youth for social issues."

Ayesha Riaz

25 years, female
Masters in Political Science
Masters in English Literature



Ayesha joined the 'Young Professionals Network' to:

- enhance her understanding of working in a youth based project with special emphasis on political growth and understanding on part of youth,
- work with a professional and learned group on issues that are usually not taken into account in Pakistan unless it is part of one's profession and
- properly utilize her potential at a platform that can make a difference in the times to come.

As a member of YPN,

She had earned such experience which had given a new dimension to her approach towards youth's active participation in politics, social reforms, sustainable peace, conflict management and resolution. She has firmly adopted a cohesive attitude towards projecting the young generation of Pakistan as per their potential and capabilities at international level.

During her participation to the 'Young Professionals Network', Ayesha has taken up successful steps as:

- formation of sub group of universities and colleges for promoting political awareness in youth and mobilization for their active participation in the said process and
- internationally, writing articles and features in order to project youth in Pakistan regarding their role on political and social issues.

Ayesha says...

“It has been a privilege to be part of such an organization, with the commitment and devoted effect that I have been witnessed to, while working with FES. I hope they will carry on with promoting youth in Pakistan in a positive way and provide them means of proving their abilities in future as well.”

Youth Parliament Pakistan

Youth Parliament Pakistan is another youth project initiated by FES-Pakistan. The specific objectives of this project are to educate Pakistani youth about politics and democracy and to demonstrate to them how Parliaments are able to:

- make legislation,
- debate matters of national and international concern,
- demand accountability from those in government,
- discuss legislation in committees,
- change government without recourse to civil disorder and
- make and enforce their own rules of conduct.

In addition it is expected that the Youth Parliament Pakistan will become a useful forum to voice views of youth about a range of national and international issues.

Sixty Pakistani youth aged between 18-29 years were selected for membership from all across the country. The seats have been divided among provinces of the country on the basis of population criteria used by the National Assembly of Pakistan.

The time period for each term of the Youth Parliament is 'one year'. It meets for 30 days in the year. The first 'Youth Parliament Pakistan' shall complete its tenure in December 2007. Activities include;

- *plenary sessions* which have debated important issues such as the state of youth, youth policy, federalism and provincial autonomy, state of education and the new education policy, state of democracy and the way forward, law and order situation in Pakistan, etc.
- *visits and meetings with influential figures* like the Prime Minister of Pakistan have been arranged for the members of Youth Parliament focusing on enhancing youth's leadership development and understanding of crucial policy issues.

During the eight months of its existence the 'Youth Parliament Pakistan' provided a useful forum to Pakistani youth to discuss issues of concern to young people and voice their views about a range of national and international issues in a free but structured manner. This exposure also helped to shape the young parliamentarians' views on joining politics and to work through the democratic process in order to change the current political culture. The experience of being a youth parliamentarian was a combination of leadership and discipline, patience and moderation, with the rewards being immense and expected to be of value throughout life.

Members of Youth Parliament Pakistan during their session





Participants of FES Sri Lanka Youth Program

The FES youth activities in Sri Lanka



Participants of FES Sri Lanka Youth Program

The FES youth activities in Sri Lanka

Background

In the recent past Sri Lanka has faced two major youth uprisings manifested in the form of violent political actions. These are largely due to marginalization of youth in the decision making process, lack of exposure and experience on emerging regional and global developments, lack of access to socio-economic benefits and opportunities and so on.

In view of the above and the potential that youth carry on the future of Sri Lanka, FES decided to engage the Sri Lankan youth issue in a constructive manner that will articulate and identify the existing problems. It also sought to focus on addressing of key issues of youth with a view to facilitating the Sri Lankan youth to play a more important and decisive role in policy making and in the affairs of the state.

As the Sri Lankan FES office was started a little over four decades ago, a large number of activities have been implemented from time to time on various interests. The area of 'youth' has always remained of special interest.

The following projects for youth have been completed by FES-Sri Lanka in recent years:

- National Youth Survey 2000/2001
- Young Leaders Forum
- Civic Education for Youth

Current youth projects of FES-Sri Lanka

Currently FES-Sri Lanka office is running two projects for youth as following:

1. Young Leaders Training (in Sinhala and Tamil mediums)
2. Civic Education for Young Activists in Tsunami affected areas

Objectives

The overall objectives of such initiatives are:

- To train young leaders to be catalysts of the process of representing and advocating the interests of youth.
- Reflecting the interests of youth and women in the process of socio-economic, political and cultural reform
- Enabling youth in the Tsunami affected communities to actively engage in the reconstruction process and assert their just rights.

Activities

1. Young Leaders Forum: Civic education programme for youth from Moneragala and Badulla districts in Uva Province, Sri Lanka was conducted in Sinhala and Tamil mediums. The evaluation that was held together with both groups in November 2007, showed that the participants are really interested in continuing the program. They remarked that they have learnt quite a lot and they will be using the knowledge that they gained from this program within their communities.

2. Civic Education for Young Activists in South: The Civic Education Programme was conducted for youth in Tsunami affected districts of Matara and Hambanatota in the southern province.

The programme focused on motivating youth to know their rights, how to achieve social goals, to be responsible citizens, contribute to their empowerment and the development of their communities and neighbourhoods. The programme was conducted by Social Economic and Environmental Development Organization (SEEDO), a partner organization to FES-Sri Lanka.

Members of the FES-Sri Lanka's youth projects

Participants of both projects are youth below 30 years old including both females and males. They are selected from their respective districts.

The participants of the *Young Leaders Forum* were selected through direct interviewing and most of them are in their secondary education period.

The participants of the *Civic Education for Young Activists in South* are the victims of Tsunami.

Achievements and general impact

Both groups;

- have gained a good knowledge about civic education.
- are able to use the knowledge that they gained through these programs in their day to day activities and especially the participants of Tsunami affected areas are now able to proceed with obtaining their lost documents etc, particularly by the knowledge they gained.
- share the knowledge they gained with their respective communities.

Challenges

Participants have not been so happy with some of resource persons methodologies used in some of their programs.

Successful stories

V. Ruthiradepan

29 year old, male
Diploma in Multi Media and in
Human Rights



Ruthiradepan is coming from a much involved background in youth activities during his college days. He has organised voluntary community services and development works such as several blood donation camps in Trichirappalli, in South India. He joined the FES youth project, called 'Political Education for Young Leaders in the Plantation Sector' in July 2006 to:

- Develop leadership skills, gain or uplift his knowledge on political sciences and to become a political leader.
- Learn more about the ethnic conflict situations and non-violent conflict resolution methods.
- Initiate a youth networking organization (an umbrella type organization)
- Improve his knowledge on good governance, democratic practices, and participatory training tactics.

Ruthiradepan is still a participant of the FES-Sri Lanka's youth project, through which he;

- improved his leadership and communication skills,
- developed his knowledge on political science,
- conceptualized youth networking and its activities,
- learned to organise and mobilise people and also,
- learned about participatory methods in conflict resolution and violation prevention.

They all helped him in coordinating and conducting several seminars on human rights, understanding conflict and conflict prevention as well as democracy and its importance. He has also coordinated youth related activities in estate and rural sector. His youth networking programme is in progress.

Ruthiradepan says...

[Being as a participant of the FES-Sri Lanka youth project,] “I realised that there is a vast improvement and change that has taken place in me and developed my confidence in organising, mobilising, coordinating and facilitating any event.”

Ruthiradepan during a youth session



K. Ranjaneemala

27 years old, female
Certificate in Human Rights



Ranjaneemala is mainly interested in communication, media, human rights and gender development.

She is interested in dealing with problems of youth and being helpful to them in finding solutions, making them understand their power and mobilising it to improve their living standards within their community.

It was Ranjaneemala's long term dream to be a radio journalist which opened her way to the FES-Sri Lanka's youth project called 'Empowerment of Plantation Youth through Community Radio Program' in July 2005. She is still a participant of this project.

Being a member of such a project, she learned radio programme producing and editing, developed report writing and script writing skills and also improved her interviewing skills. Learning all such skills helped her later on to get Involved in;

- field workshops and collecting information by the media unit,
- announcing activities conducted on official levels and
- preparation of detailed reports and programs of different training workshops.

Ranjaneemala says...

“Our information dissemination process was very much successful and through that lots of youth had gained employment opportunities and awareness on right issues and democratic values.”

R. Priyadarshani

**25 years old, female
BSc. Statistics
Certificates in Human Rights
and in Management
Accountant–Foundation**



Priyadarshani was selected to the FES-Sri Lanka's youth project called 'Political Education for Young Leaders in the Plantation Sector' in July 2006, with a lot of aspiring motives to:

- basically get a good knowledge on political, social economical and cultural issues,
- develop internal leadership qualities and discover correct paths for the social recognition,
- learn the history of ethnic differences, reasons for that and negotiation skills,
- gain proper knowledge on legal education and its correct usage for social betterment,
- identify ways of understanding others' views as a quality of successful leader and
- understand methods on preventing basic violence and achievement of peace.

As a member of this program, she learned to:

- identify weaknesses through the SWOT analysis and became able to develop them to strengths,
- know more about values of human rights , good governance and democracy and
- resolve conflicts and build peace.

With help of such skills she developed easy methods to disseminate gathered knowledge to general community and managed to coordinate activities in training programmes, facilitating seminars on human rights, workers' rights, women's rights and children's rights and providing guidance to organize women's committees.

Priyadarshani says...

“I'm living in a multi-ethnic society in Sri Lanka. There are Sinhala speaking, Tamil speaking and English speaking people living there, who have their own cultural, religious and language differences. This program motivated me to respect others' views and their cultural beliefs and religious values.”

Conclusions

1. The Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation has contributed in bringing up and educating socially and politically oriented youth groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, that are working for peace building, conflict transformation, democracy and social development in their respective countries.
2. The FES youth projects in all the three target countries encompass limited groups of youth. The success of such projects strongly depends to the extent their participants, later on, intervene in their communities, turning to multipliers of the skills, knowledge and experiences they obtain during the project.
3. There are participants of FES youth projects in the mentioned target countries, who have successfully taken different initiatives for youth in their respective communities and are now acting as multipliers. Examples of such local initiatives are:
 - *In Afghanistan:* Training programs on non-violent communication and negotiation skills organized by some members of the 'Young Leaders Forum' (YLF) for youth in different provinces in the country and establishment of an independent cultural youth organization in Badghis Province, north western Afghanistan, by another member of the YLF.
 - *In Pakistan:* Formation of the Human Development Organization in Dir district, Pakistan by some members of the 'Young Professionals Network' (YPN). The organization works for the betterment of youth in the same area through capacity building and advocacy.
 - *In Sri Lanka:* Coordination and conduction of several seminars on hu-

man rights, understanding conflicts & conflict prevention, understanding democracy and coordination of youth related activities in estate and rural sectors in the country by some members of the FES-Sri Lanka's youth project called 'Political Education for Young Leaders in the Plantation Sector'.

4. The FES youth programs in the target countries have also promoted culture of tolerance and constructive dialogue among their participants coming from different regional, ethnic, social and political backgrounds.
5. The FES youth programs have not only addressed a variety of domestic social, political and economic issues, in which the target youth have been interested in their respective countries, but also drawn their attention on some important regional and global issues, such as regional co-operation, Millennium Development Goals and globalization.
6. Through all these projects, FES has tried to engage youth in the development process in their respective countries to ensure a sustainable democratic future for their communities and states.
7. Regional exchange programs among the target groups, designed and supported by FES have promoted their mutual and regional understanding of each other which on the long run, is likely to lead to better networking and co-operation among the groups, thus contributing to the democratic change and development process in the region. On the other hand, the FES international exchange programs have provided the target groups with opportunity to further understand and learn about other youth activists, programs and organizations outside the region and mainly in Europe as well as to extend their networks to such groups on the international level.

Important website addresses

1. www.fes.de
2. www.fes.org.af
3. www.fes.org.pk
4. www.fesrilanka.org