

MEETING MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING WITH UJALA PARTNERS FOR THE FINALIZATION OF CONTINGENCY PLAN ON CURRENT COVID-19 SITUATION

With the current ongoing COVID-19 pandemic around the globe, under the Ujala program, an online meeting with Provincial, Core and Activity-Based District Partners was held on April 8, 2020, on Zoom. Following are the name of the organizations and participants participated in the meeting:

S No.	Participant Name	Organization Name	Designation	City/District & Province
1.	Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman	AwazCDS- Pakistan	Chief Executive	Islamabad
2.	Ms. Marium Amjad	AwazCDS-Pakistan	Campaign Manager	Islamabad
3.	Ms. Mehroze Younas	AwazCDS-Pakistan	Program Associate	Islamabad
4.	Mr. Abid Hussain Lashari	National Disability Forum	CEO	Sanghar- Sindh
5.	Mr. Shahzad Malik	ARTS Foundation	Executive Director	Mirpurkhas- Sindh
6.	Mr. Khurram Shahid	Sustainable Development Organization	Chief Executive	Muzaffarabad- AJ&K
7.	Ms. Sana Ahmad	Blue Veins	Program Officer	Peshawar- KP
8.	Mr. Zia Ullah Baloch	HARD	Provincial Coordinator	Quetta- Balochistan
9.	Mr. Rafi Ullah	Khpal Kore	Chairman	Mardan- KP
10.	Mr. Muneeb Hussain	Equality For All	CEO	Bahawalpur- Punjab
11.	Mr. Abdul Rub Farooqui	JAAG Welfare Organization	Executive Director	Rahim Yar Khan- Punjab
12.	Mr. Muhammad Zahir	Allied Development Organization	Executive Director	Mansehra- KP
13.	Mr. Iftikhar Mubarak	Search For Justice/CAN	Executive Director	Lahore- Punjab
14.	Ms. Shumaila Iqbal	RASTI	President	Karachi West- Sindh
15.	Mr. Fayyaz Hussain	Mehran Welfare Trust	Representative from MWT	Larkana- Sindh
16.	Dr. Bilquis Rehman	Council for Participatory Development	CEO	Karachi Central- Sindh

17.	Mr. Amjad Hussain	DHEWA	President	Chakwal- Punjab
18.	Mr. Aamir Pervez Khokhar	Elohim Church	Chairman	Peshawar- KP
19.	Mr. Aziz-ur- Rehman	Al- Dua Welfare Foundation	Chairman	Bannu- KP
20.	Mr. Inam Ullah	Sada-e-Thal Welfare Organization	Chairman	Karak- KP
21.	Ms. Fizza Kanwal	Women Shade	Program Manager	Quetta- Balochistan
22.	Mr. Muhammad Sulaiman	Peace Justice Youth Organization	Representative from PYJO	Noshehra- KP
23.	Ms. Rashida Qureshi	Search For Justice/CAN	Program Coordinator	Lahore- Punjab
24.	Mr. Mustafa Chauhan	Aika Theatre Group	Director	Lahore- Punjab
25.	Mr. Aftab Mastoi	NEELAB	President	Rajanpur- Punjab
26.	Mr. Albert Patras	Society for Empowering People	Executive Director	Vehari- Punjab
27.	Mr. Irfan Ali	Sindh Radiant Organization	Program Officer	Thatta- Sindh
28.	Mr. Ghamkhar Hayat	Azat Foundation	Representative from Azat Foundation	Noshki- Balochistan
29.	Mr. Abdul Manan	Waseela Development Organization	Executive Director	Loralai- Balochistan
30.	Ms. Shahida Noor	Takhleeq Foundation	Project Manager	Karachi- Sindh
31.	Mr. Abdul Razzaq	Sindh Desert Development Organization	Executive Director	Umerkot- Sindh
32.	Mr. Muhammad Anwar	CARD	Executive Director	Lasbela- Balochistan
33.	Ms. Hameeda Noor	SHADE	CEO	Jaffarabad- Balochistan
34.	Mr. Naseem Anthony	AWAM	Director Programme	Faisalabad- Punjab
35.	Mr. Maaz Asghar	NEELAB	Program Manager	Rajanpur- Punjab
36.	Mr. Waqar Puri	STEP	Representative from STEP	Islamabad
37.	Mr. Imran Karim Khattak	NFWWD	Representative from NFWWD	Islamabad
38.	Mr. Naseer Ahmad Channa	Bright Star Development Society	Chief Executive	Sibbi- Balochistan
39.	Mr. Riaz Ahmed	Sujag Sansar Organization	Representative from SSO	Dadu- Sindh

40.	Mr. Amir Sohail	SAHARA	President	DI Khan- KP
41	Mr. Muhammad Hasnain	BSDI	Program Officer	Mastung- Balochistan
42	Mr. Rahim Bahadur	Al- Falah Tanzeem	President	Swat- KP
43	Mr. Muhammad Shoaib	DTT	Chairman	Kohat- KP
44	Mr. Shafique Ahmed	NARI Foundation	Program Manager	Sukkur- Sindh
45	Ms. Sumera Mehboob	Mechanism for Rational Change	Director	Khuzdar- Balochistan
46	Mr. Ehsan Bari	NOSD	Representative from NOSD	Muzaffargarh- Punjab

AGENDA:

Following were the agenda of the meeting:

- 1) To discuss the situation of corona pandemic at district levels;
- 2) Performance and steps taken by the government at district levels to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 3) Steps to reach out to the communities to provide facilities and support during this pandemic; especially, to the **MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS** like Women Headed Families, TGs, PWDs, Elderly People, etc. and;
- 4) How Ujala can contribute to mitigate the adverse impact of COVID-19, what are the ways for advocacy and mechanisms to ensure accountability.

Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman (Chief Executive- AwazCDS) formally started the meeting by welcoming and thanking the participants for joining the meeting online. Based on the agenda, participants were asked about the current situation of COVID-19 pandemic in their respective districts. The responses received from the participants are mentioned below:

Participant Name	Responses received against corona pandemic situation and government's measurements at district levels
Mr. Rafi Ullah from Mardan	While highlighting the current situation in Mardan, Mr. Rafi Ullah shared that, the first case of COVID-19 in Pakistan was from Mardan UC- Manga. The UC Manga and district Mardan were locked down right after the first case was identified and the process of COVID-19 testing was started immediately. From the test, 70 individuals were tested positive of COVID-19. Nearly 109 tests of COVID-19 were negative. Some of the cases

	<p>were also identified in UC Takht Bhai and UC Mayar. One death in Mardan and one death in Mayar were reported because of this corona pandemic. Because of locked down and steps taken by the government to mitigate corona impact, right now, the overall situation in Mardan is under control. Coming towards discussing the government's steps taken for COVID-19 in Mardan, Mr. Rafi said that the performance of the government is overall satisfactory. The government is trying to take the best possible steps to mitigate its adverse impact in the area. While discussing the precautionary measures taken by the public, people in Mardan are not following the concept of social distancing. There is a lack of awareness in people regarding COVID-19, especially, from hygiene and social distancing point of view. Because of this pandemic, the issue related to mental health is also observed and has increased in Mardan. During this pandemic, it is important to focus on this particular issue as well.</p>
<p>Mr. Muneeb Hussain from Bahawalpur</p>	<p>Mr. Muneeb shared the current situation of COVID- 19 in Bahawalpur. He mentioned that the situation in Bahawalpur is much better and under control than other districts. There was a total of two positive cases in Bahawalpur. Out of these two cases, one death is reported and the other case is still under observation. The Deputy Commissioner in Bahawalpur is actively observing and managing the corona situation. He further said that to fight against the corona pandemic, along with the district government, we are working on the activities like ration distribution and providing disinfection and sanitation services in district Bahawalpur. The situation of locked down is still observed in district Bahawalpur.</p>
<p>Ms. Hameeda Noor from Jaffarabad</p>	<p>While sharing the current situation on COVID-19 in Quetta- Balochistan, Ms. Hameeda mentioned that the current cases in Quetta are approx. 206. Out of these 206 cases, the majorities are doctors. Some of the reported cases of doctors are from the local transmission and some cases of doctors are reported who are in direct contact with patients and are working in isolation with them. It is observed that in Quetta the safety protocols are not being followed and the government has not provided PPEs to the doctors and medical staff, due to which the virus is transmitted to the doctors and medical staff. She further added that so far, the process of disinfecting the local communities and markets is not observed in Quetta. While discussing the locked-down situation, she mentioned that from few weeks strict locked down was observed in Quetta and still the city is locked-down. However, in some slum areas, public gatherings are still being observed and some of the markets are also opened, due to which the probability of transmitting of coronavirus has been increased. Within the communities, the cases are not reported in the numbers as it was expected. Further, adding more to it, the cases that are reporting in Quetta, those cases do not have the corona symptoms. Very limited reported cases are with symptoms of the corona. She mentioned that in Quetta, we are unable to identify and report the corona cases in the community and how far are they spreading it in the community. The reason for the widespread of corona in Quetta is because of the group of people who came from Iran. Another group of 6000 -7000 people are also expected to come to Quetta from Iran in the coming days, which is also not reported. In Taftan, 100+ people are</p>

	<p>in quarantine centers. Because of the locked-down situation, the lives of daily wagers are badly affected. People in Quetta are worried more about food than the corona pandemic. There is no such relief from the government side in this regard. Organizations and youth are distributing ration among daily wagers by using their own source of fundraising, which is also not at a larger-level. The situation in Balochistan is observed to be critical in the coming days.</p>
<p>Mr. Khurram Shahid from Muzaffarabad</p>	<p>Mr. Khurram Shahid reflected upon the situation of the corona pandemic in Azad Jammu & Kashmir. In Mirpur 06, Bhimbar 07, Sudhnuti 04 and Rawalakot 01 case of the corona has been identified so far. In Muzaffarabad, the isolation center that is comprised of 50 beds has been established. In Mirpur, out of two isolation centers, one center is active and the other is under construction. He further said that so far more than 3500 people out of the country reached Mirpur in these days. From this huge number, only those who are in the information and access of government are passing through the screening, testing and isolation process of COVID-19. A test of more than 200 people has been sent to Islamabad for further process. The cases reported so far are 18; reports of approx. 11 people are awaited. The feedback from the government's side in this regard is yet to be awaited.</p> <p>Mr. Khurram further highlighted the issue that, those people who are coming from Islamabad and Karachi to Muzaffarabad, Jhelum valley and Neelum, there is no proper process of screening for them. The general issues of the daily wagers are observed in AJ&K as well. Regarding Law and Enforcement situation in Muzaffarabad, the situation is better as compared to other regions/areas/provinces. There is no such case report from Muzaffarabad. Other areas like Neelum, Bhimbar and Mirpur division is highly affected and vulnerable from COVID-19. After the Mirpur division, Bhimbar is the second most affected area from COVID-19. The issue of testing capacity is also observed in AJ&K. There is no proper set up for the screening. There are some areas where there is a facility of proper testing and screening but in general, no standard testing and screening are available.</p>
<p>Mr. Ghamkhar Hayat from Noshki</p>	<p>There is no case report from Noshki as such. However, like other areas, Noshki is also locked down. There is a quarantine center established by the government in Noshki, but no case is reported so far. As far as the testing facility is concerned, there are no standards and proper mechanisms established for testing purposes. Daily wagers and laborers are facing challenges and there is no source of income for them. So far, the government has not announced the relief package. While highlighting the work being done by Azat Foundation during this pandemic, Mr. Hayat highlighted that volunteers from their organization are working on campaigns and collecting data of people for ration distribution purposes.</p>
<p>Dr. Bilquis Rehman from Karachi</p>	<p>Dr. Bilquis Rehman from the organization Council for Participatory Development, while sharing the situation of the corona pandemic in Karachi, mentioned that in Karachi, the cases are above 1000 and the role and efforts of the government to overcome this pandemic are very well. The main challenge is linked with the situation of locked down for a longer period. In the slum areas, although the people have awareness, still they are not</p>

	<p>practicing social distancing. The major mode of income for people in Karachi is through running small businesses, therefore, rather than staying indoors during locked down for a longer period, those who are daily wagers would prefer to go to their works to fulfill their basic needs of earning money and to feed their families. Based on the situation, people would be more concerned about their livelihoods than the COVID-19 pandemic. As the ration distribution in Karachi is immense therefore, right now, the main challenge is the sustainability of people's livelihood during locked down.</p>
Mr. Abdul Razzaq from Umerkot	<p>Mr. Abdul Razzaq from organization SDDO shared the situation of Umerkot- Sindh that as Umerkot is already located in the desert where there is already drought stress. He mentioned that the district is hardly affected by corona; instead, it is a locked-down situation that has an adverse impact on district Umerkot, because there is no relief provided in the district. Drought stress in district Umerkot is increased because of the locked-down situation. Under these circumstances, where locked-down is the biggest challenge and no relief is being provided by the government, people in desert including Thar, are starving. Two cases of the corona were reported in Umerkot. No screening testing kits are available in Umerkot.</p>
Mr. Aftab Nawaz Mastoi from Rajanpur	<p>While sharing the situation of district Rajanpur, Mr. Aftab mentioned that the locked-down situation is the same as in other areas. A total of 67 people in the district are in the quarantine center of Fazilpur Danish School. The most vulnerable situation is in Dera Ghazi Khan, where doctors are largely affected by this pandemic. He further said that the main issue observed here is that people are allowed to go to their homes before the test reports are out. The other main issue is that because of the locked-down situation, people are starving, no/limited sources of livelihood. The transgender communities in Rajanpur are also affected by this ongoing pandemic and locked down situation. No relief from the government is provided/announced for them. After the notification from Deputy Commissioner that without prior notice, no local organization or volunteer is allowed to work on overcoming this pandemic. Moreover, the deputy commissioner will allocate areas by themselves for distribution purposes.</p>

Moving towards the next two points of the agenda, while keeping in view the most vulnerable groups i.e. Women Headed Families, Transgenders, PWDs, Elderly People, etc., the participants were asked regarding the status of registration of these vulnerable groups by the government in Ehsaas program and how these vulnerable groups are accessing the relief during corona pandemic. Along with that, participants were also asked how Ujala partners can contribute in assisting the above mentioned vulnerable groups in the registration process. Responses and suggestions received from the participants are the following:

Responses received from the participants	Suggestions received from the participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Abid Lashari from Nawabshah responded that because of the lack of awareness among people, the percentage of registration is less in number. Most of the individuals are unable to understand the process of registering themselves in the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program. Issues like no offices of District Management etc. make it a challenge for the eligible persons to avail this facility. He further said that because of the challenges faced by the individuals in registration, a huge percentage of deserving people will not be able to avail this facility of the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program. Moreover, responding to the opening of registration counters with the help of the district government, Mr. Abid highlighted that the government will not allow the opening of the registration counters, as it will increase the public gathering and thus the social distancing will not be practiced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An alternative possible way out to raise awareness of the people via radio regarding the registration process was suggested by Ms. Mariam Amjad and Ms. Rashida Qureshi. By doing radio campaigns and paid campaigns on social media, along with increasing awareness of the people on how to get registered for the program, we can also increase awareness of people on adopting safety measures and practicing social distancing. Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman further added that by sponsoring the Deputy Commissioner or the focal person of that respective district, the process of registration in the local language can be recorded on the radio by them. Mr. Ifthikar Mubarik from SFJ/CAN suggested that the speaker of Mosques can also be used for raising awareness about registration. It has been observed that the messages from district government regarding safety measures are done by using Mosques' speakers in many areas and it can be one of the effective strategies to adopt to raise the awareness regarding registration process among people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Aziz-ur-Rehman from Bannu mentioned that it has been observed that the government is unable to provide sufficient relief to the people. He further said that along with many other NGOs, Al-Khidmat is working hugely for providing relief to the people during this pandemic. In Bannu, one person has reported death because of the corona. 3-4 people are in the quarantine center. The situation of lockdown in the same in Bannu as in other cities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Aziz suggested that for the vulnerable groups especially, for the transgenders and PWDs, the relief and assistance must be given to them at their doorstep. Al-Dua Welfare is planning to distribute the sanitizers and masks in the offices of PWDs and the organization is planning to distribute the ration, medicines, cash among the transgender community at their doorsteps.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Mustafa Chauhan from Lahore said that we do not exactly know how much time the registration process will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Mustafa suggested that by adopting precautionary measures, the strategy of reaching the door to door can be

take. He further highlighted the issue that transgender do not have their CNICs, so registering them under this program is a challenge.

adapted to help the vulnerable groups. Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman further suggested Ujala partners to identify the transgender and suggest with the procedure on how the grant (if allocated under Ujala program) can be transparently given to them.

- Ms. Sana Ahmad from Peshawar also mentioned that as the registration process is a time taking process, therefore there is a need to do immediate help of vulnerable groups and to provide them with the necessary items at their doorsteps.
- Mr. Amjad Hussain from Chakwal suggested that through Lady Health Workers and Social Mobilizers of the population department, the transgender and PWDs can be identified in the respective areas. If LHWs and Social Mobilizers are facilitated, the lists of most vulnerable groups can be easily identified.
- Mr. Fayyaz Hussian from Larkana suggested that Mehran Welfare Trust established CSOs at local levels and with the help of those CSOs, the required steps can be taken to tackle the most vulnerable groups. He further suggested that those areas where cable TV network is functional, through advertisement and advocacy messages on the cable TV network, awareness among the communities can be raised.

- Mr. Abdul Manan from Loralai mentioned that almost 80% of the population lives in the villages that also cover Women Headed Families and Vulnerable families. Community living in the villages is unaware of the registration process.

- Mr. Manan suggested that radio is widely used in this area, therefore through radio, the awareness messages regarding the registration process in Pashto and Urdu languages would be effective.

- Mr. Zia Baloch from HARD- Balochistan added that Balochistan is at most alarming situation. The screening and testing kits in Balochistan is not yet available. The updated data of patients in Balochistan till April 7, 2020 was 202. Among these 202 cases, almost 50 are medical staff, doctors, nurses and paramedical staff to whom the government of Balochistan has not provided the masks and PPEs. He further added that in Balochistan, there is no Minister for Health who can handle the current pandemic in Balochistan. While discussing the registration process, Mr. Zia Baloch mentioned that in Balochistan, 50% of the women do not have their CNICs so this seems to be a challenge to register the people for this program. Further, he said that in Makran there is no internet facility from last 1-1.5 years because of some security reasons, therefore, the online awareness campaign is one of the challenges in this area.

Coming towards discussing the transparent and accountable mechanism of cash grants especially for transgenders, PWDs, Women Headed Families, Persons affected from HIV AIDS or for stigmatized families, suggestions received from participants are the following:

Suggestions on the transparent and accountable mechanism of cash grants for most vulnerable groups

- Ms. Rashida Qureshi suggested an easy paisa and Jazz cash option for cash grants for most vulnerable groups. She further suggested that rather than distributing ration, it is more appropriate if the cash is given to the most vulnerable groups. From a sanitary point of view, she suggested that sanitary kits including sanitizers, masks, etc. can be given to PWDs, women, girls, etc.
- Based on the mechanism and process of verification and identification shared by Mr. Naseem Anthony from Faisalabad, Mr. Zia suggested and requested him to share this process that is implementing at district level via email, to further share it with other Ujala partners and to make it a part of contingency plan as well.
- Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman suggested that the meeting of District Advisory Panels that are already established at district levels under

the Ujala program can be arranged. After the identification of vulnerable communities, through DAPs, the possible way out of enlisting those identified communities with the government's program and the process of cash grants under the Ujala program can be started.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS/DISCUSSIONS:

- Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman informed the participants that on behalf of the Ujala program, any activity that will be done by the partners in their respective districts/communities, they will inform and take their respective district government in confidence first. He further added that we will also inform NDMA and PDMA regarding the activities that we will start in the field w.r.t the corona pandemic.
- Keeping in view, the most vulnerable groups, Ms. Marium asked from the participants regarding their feasibility, outreach, and capacity to approach the target audience for cash grants. Mr. Muneeb from 'Equality For All' informed that they can cover 05 tehsils in Bahawalpur. Mr. Naseem from AWAM shared that this is in their plan to reach approx. 275 vulnerable groups including religious minorities and PWDs during this week. However, the field related work is not in the process yet; the identification and verification process is done through Zoom, Skype and Whatsapp groups.
- Based on current COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Zia shared that as the hospitals are closed, therefore, we are in communication with Ministry of Health to generate an online mobile service for the pregnant women who need pre-latent and post-latent services, and needs facilitation in delivery and for elderly people and PWDs who may get sick while staying indoors. By availing this online mobile service, the services may reach to their doorsteps.
- Mr. Shahzado from the 'ARTS Foundation' suggested that as with the ongoing corona pandemic, organizations are working immensely in the communities to mitigate the adverse impact of corona and to fight against this pandemic, organizations are working at all levels including the EHSAAS program by the government. This is a huge contribution under the Ujala program which must be consolidated and documented and share with all the partners, donors and government's stakeholders.

Conclusion and Decisions:

- Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman shared that as the ongoing program of Ujala is halt due to the corona pandemic, through this program and based on today's meeting, we will finalize the contingency plan that how we can contribute and reach to the communities especially to the MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS by considering **“Putting Vulnerable Groups First”**. He further said that we will also try to increase the facilitation cost so that it also covers the emergency need and PPEs expense of partners at provincial and district levels.
- The institutional or personal support for the activity-based district partners will also be proposed for this contingency period.
- Furthermore, Mr. Zia mentioned that, because of the current COVID-19 situation, we might have gone into the no-cost extension period of Ujala-II. For that, only the activity cost of the due activities will be given in the no-cost extension period and support of the partners will be required to complete the due activities in the no-cost extension period. However, no institutional support to the Provincial and Core District Partners will be given in the no-cost extension period. The process of request for proposal from Provincial and Core District Partners for Ujala, phase 3 will be started in the mid or at the end of May 2020.

The meeting was of two hours, started from 1300hrs and ended at 1500hrs. In the end, Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman (CE- AwazCDS) thanked all the participants for their active participation in the meeting and for providing valuable inputs, suggestions and recommendations for the contingency plan. He concluded the meeting by informing the participants that based on the suggestions and discussion held in this meeting, the contingency plan will be finalized and it will be further shared with the funding partner. Once the funding partner will approve the contingency plan, it will be shared with Ujala's Provincial, Core and Activity- Based District Partners for the execution of the plan in their respective districts.
