



Engaging Youth

for

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Summary & Synthesis Report



About the Project

Engaging Youth for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Youth spaces are shrinking in Pakistan day by day mainly due to extremism and there is a dearth for appropriate platforms where youth can express themselves and realize their potential in economic, social and political/civic spheres. The framework of Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) provides an avenue whose 17 goals and 169 targets can involve youth in development process. It calls for involving Pakistani youth with the SDGs.

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Acknowledgments

Special thanks are due to Saima Jasam for preparing this report. We would also like to mention the contribution of the various institutes we collaborated with to make these seminars possible. Thank you Mrs. Rukhsana David, Principal Kinnaird College for Women University Lahore; Dr. Gul Zaman, Vice Chancellor (VC) University of Malakand; Dr. Masoom Yasinzai, Rector International Islamic University Islamabad; Prof. Dr. Saleem Farooq, Director COMSATS Sahiwal; Dr. Malik Jahan Khan, Dean Namal College, Mianwali; Prof. Dr. Javeid Iqbal, VC University of Balochistan, Quetta; Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Jabeen, VC Sardar Bahadur Khan University, Quetta; Prof. Dr. Dost Muhammad Baloch, VC, Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences, Uthal; Commodore Ali Abbas SI, Director Bahria University, Karachi Campus; and Prof. Rauf-i-Azam (PhD), VC University of Education, Lahore.

Background & Context

Bargad in collaboration with Oxfam Pakistan organized seminars titled as “Engaging Youth for Sustainable Development Goals SDGs”, in 11 universities of all provinces of Pakistan. The list of the universities where these seminars were held are as following:



**Kinnaird College for Women
University, Lahore**

University of Malakand, Chakdara

**University of Agriculture, Dera
Ismail Khan**

**COMSATS University, Sahiwal
Campus**

Namal College, Mianwali

University of Balochistan, Quetta

**Sardar Bahadur Khan Women’s
University, Quetta**

**Lasbela University of Agriculture,
Water and Marine Sciences
(LUAWMS), Uthal**

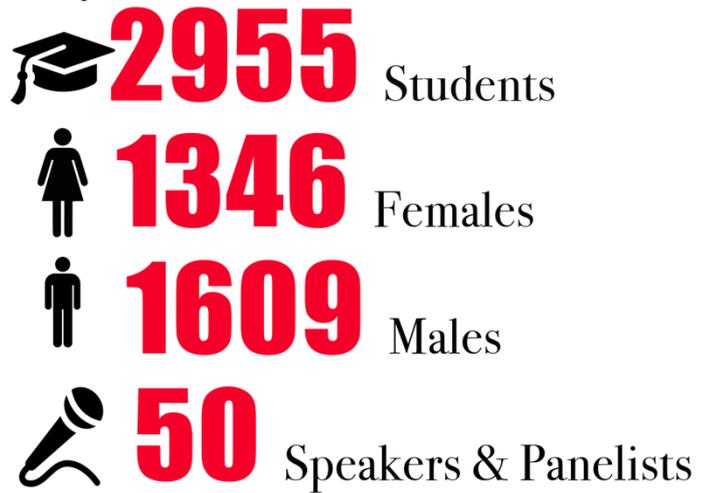
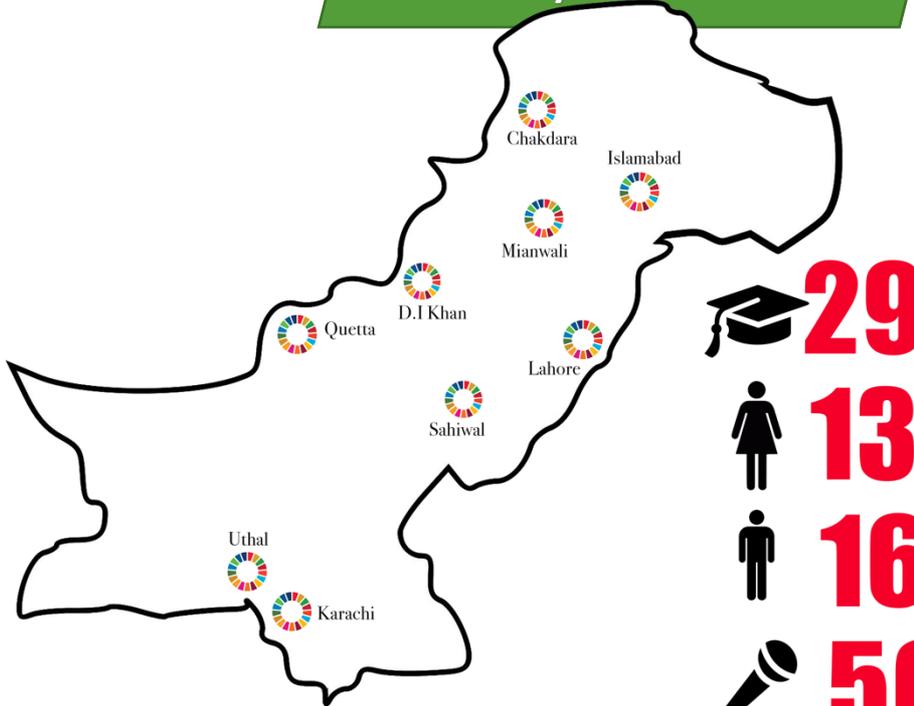
Bahria University, Karachi Campus

University of Education, Lahore

**International Islamic University,
Islamabad**

These seminars were a part of Bargad and Oxfam’s nationwide campaign on SDGs.

Key Statistics



The main purpose of the seminars was to provide a platform and disseminate information to students on Sustainable Development Goals and solicit their recommendations for future interventions, specifically in the context of Pakistan. The priority areas for Bargad and Oxfam Pakistan were:



Methodology

It was encouraging to see that almost an equal number of girls participated with the boys.



They came from very diversified backgrounds and disciplines which included :

Social Sciences	Economics	IT	International Relations	Psychology
Business Studies	International Law	Chemistry	Mathematics	Islamic Studies
Biology	Zoology	Bio-Tech	Marine Sciences	Agriculture
Mechanical Engineering	Bio Sciences	Bioinformatics	Management Sciences	Software Engineering
Finance & Management	English Department	Agronomy	Education Department	Electrical Engineering

The seminar speakers/panelists were also from various disciplines, including subject matter experts who engaged the students and familiarized them on the subject of SDGs.

The seminars were organized in a structured manner based upon a qualitative technique where a participatory approach was used. This has helped Bargad to collate their results in a systemic way for the brief report.

The purpose of the seminars was three-pronged, i.e. to engage students at all stages, before during and after the seminars.

Pre-seminar orientation sessions were held to gauge where the students stood in terms of their understanding or knowledge on SDGs. Besides the main speakers, one student was also selected from each university to be a presenter; this was designed so that we could get youth perspectives on how to engage fellow youth for future interventions. A question/answer session followed after the presentations of the speakers. Here, again, the students were encouraged to raise questions. Last but not least, after the conclusion of the seminars, a special feedback/recommendation session was also organized in each university. This was achieved through an open ended structured questionnaire, which was developed to acquire recommendations from students for future engagements.

A sampling was carried out, where 25 students from each university were requested to fill out the above mentioned questionnaire. The recommendations given in section 4 of this brief were derived from this exercise.

Overview of Student Questions

After presentations and lectures by the speakers, question/answer sessions were held in each university. During these sessions approximately 57 pertinent questions and queries were raised by the students in relation to the selected SDGs. The overview of student questions is as follows:

The university youth were interested in knowing who the primary stakeholders were in the implementation of the SDGs and how the youth could play their role in advancing them.

They were also very critical of the Government for being a signatory to the SDGs without including universities or even making the SDGs part of their curriculum. They thanked Bargad for bringing them (students) up to date, for the first time, and making them realize their (SDGs) significance in the development of Pakistan.

The participating students were also very naïve about Pakistan's ranking in the world vis a vis all the goals and were very inquisitive to know about it; they were aware of the fact that Pakistan was on the verge of facing severe water shortages by 2025 and were perplexed by the fact that there was no national policy or measures in place to avert this catastrophe; what does Pakistan need to do, who can we take up as a role model and implement their best practices for our own benefit. In relation to the goal, peace and justice, the students were very interested in knowing the fate of the people of FATA as they were facing numerous difficulties including the denial of justice and not being mainstreamed. They also clubbed the rights of minorities and with inter-sect and ethnic conflicts and wondered how the implementation of SDGs could be beneficial in playing a positive role in all the above situations.

There were many speakers who emphasized the importance of decent work, economic growth and its sustainability; students by and large were confused as to how one could have economic growth without affecting sustainability, they understood that unbridled

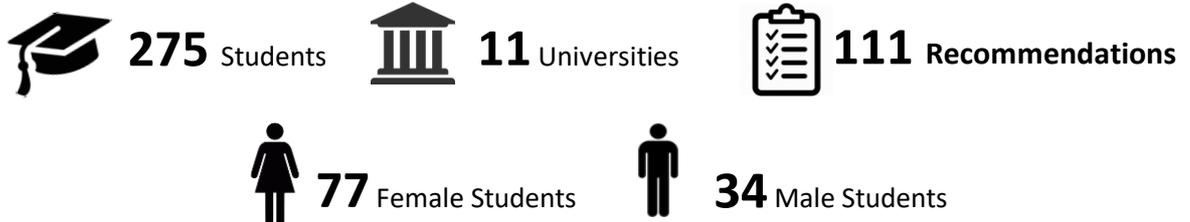
consumption coupled with industrial growth spelled disaster for the world, so the question was how to balance both without compromising the future of this planet. The students were also keen to understand how entrepreneurships could resolve the issue of unemployment and how the government could provide incentives for the development of skills of the youth.

On the issue of the existing curriculum, students were of the opinion that it needed to include current affairs with special emphasis on the various international treaties (e.g. SDGs etc.) that Pakistan is signatory to. The students were also anxious about gender equality and the rights of the transgender; they were not very clear about the difference between gender equality and gender equity; equity for them meant the quality of being fair and impartial and equality did not necessarily mean being fair. Many thought it was due to the wrong interpretation of religion by ill-informed people who were trying to manipulate it for their benefits.

Many students thought that Helplines provided to women by the government was a good step, but they were concerned that these Helplines primarily catered to the urban populations and the women of rural areas were being left out. Moreover, there were no mechanisms in place to safeguard women who complained against family members.

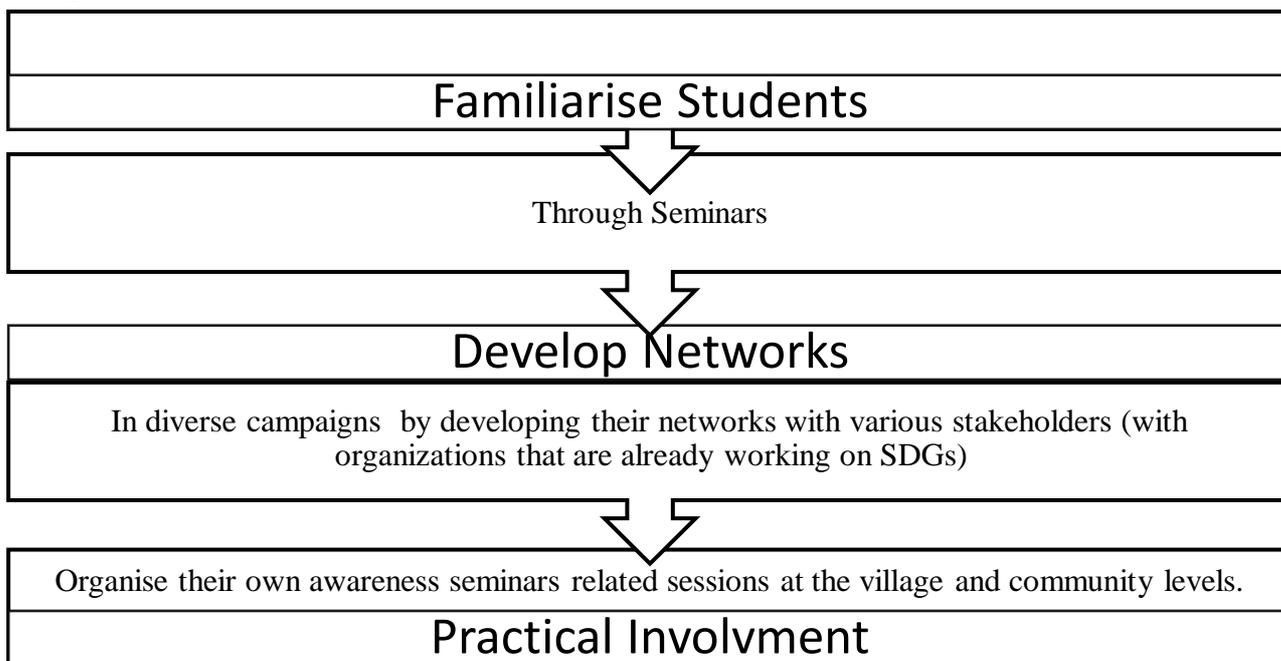
Students appreciated the work that Bargad & Oxfam was doing, but they pointed out that the failure of MDGs was because it was not inclusive in its approach and many marginalized groups including persons with disabilities were left out. However, SDGs came through with an agenda that included everyone. Students suggested that Bargad should also include the issues of persons with disabilities in these seminars.

1. Results of Key Recommendations



a) General Recommendations on

- The imparting and transferring of knowledge about SDGs should be a three step process



- It was demanded that the seminars should ensure solution oriented content that leads to actionable steps.
- It was appreciated that civil society organizations are sensitizing youth on different aspects of the SDGs, but it was suggested to see all goals of SDGs being brought under discussion, not just a few selected ones.
- It was recommended that a pre-decided number of students' participation should be ensured from all universities. Some stipends for travel and communications expenditures should be provided for volunteers who could design and arrange projects for the proliferation of SDGs.
- It was highly recommended that Bargad should assist existing student bodies in the universities to organize similar workshops and seminars on SDGs. Student ambassadors should be chosen from these activities to raise these issues on diverse platforms. Besides having seminars on site, Bargad should encourage and push their online training modules so that a much wider audience can benefit from their expertise.
- Conferences could be another method where research papers on selected topics of SDGs could be shared with the students.
- Career counselors could be involved to start a campaign for providing advice to students.

- Seminars should be organized in far flung regions where there is a dire need for guidance. Students should be given certificates as it would encourage them to participate and play their role in development.
- Multiple platforms were suggested for future interventions and to part knowledge to students. This could be done through a series of 2-3 day workshops and seminars on specific SDG topics. This would not only enable the youth but also multiply their efforts.
- Bargad should engage youth in practical ways, such as seminars, awareness raisings campaigns, corner meetings and focal group discussions to accelerate the dissemination of information about the SDGs.
- These types of seminars on Sustainable Development should be organized regularly and they should be part of mandatory courses and trainings in all the universities and Government institutions of Pakistan. Series of follow up sessions be conducted to keep the students constantly engaged and to evaluate their learning.
- Electronic, print and social media should be continuously used to disseminate the information on SDGs. Popular channels on TV could also be engaged.
- Only conducting seminars is not enough, students from different universities should be made ambassadors to continually provide information about SDG's and receive ideas and strategies for their implementation from their fellow students.
- Each University should have a 'Youth Development Department' for the growth of youth where organizations like Bargad can conduct trainings, workshops and seminars.
- A special Department or cell to be introduced in universities where women could suggest, complain or recommend their concerns.
- The topics Justice and Peace, Economic Growth, Gender Equality, Clean water and Sanitation and Quality Education should be the focus of upcoming seminars and they should be conducted regularly on a war footing basis.
- Quality Education (SDG 4) should become an essential part of the future work of Bargad, as it is the primary goal for all educational institutions.

b) Goal Specific

Highlights of Commitments made by Students

I want to commit myself to a lifelong effort to run campaigns on SDGs and spread the message that I learnt from the seminar. It is pertinent to tell that I am already involved in one such group, 'Quetta on a line' This is a blood donation campaign and we would welcome your support. (Asfandvar Khan, University of Balochistan)

comes to the...
stly forced to
beg and earn a living through prostitution. It would be of immense importance see their rights being protected and they being given equal opportunities to contribute towards a prejudice free society.

The topics of Gender equality and co-education were very important for me. My goal in life is to meet and convince people to send their daughters to universities and colleges and I would recommend that this work for building of young girls so that they could become discussions. (Sumaiya Ghafoor, Lasbela University)

It was recommended to Bargad holding specific workshops designed to this end and that that Bargad ensures that their voices are also heard at the national level. Gender equality is the hallmark of an evolved society. Civil society and other humanitarian organizations should join hands to work for vocational and technical capacity building of young girls so that they could become supporting hands for their families. Courses on feminism and gender equality should be conducted in all universities as students have little or no knowledge about these issues.

- Campaigns for the conservation of water should be designed in conjunction with students.
- Bargad should organize seminars with the help of students to raise awareness about the importance of clean drinking water and sanitization. Campaigns need to be designed to put a sustained pressure on the government to install water purification plants at union council levels all over the country.
- It was suggested to formulate a group in each university to run a campaign for the planting of trees. This will also encourage students to engage practically in the implementation of the SDGs and learn how to work and connect with other stakeholders collaboratively.
- There is a dearth of entrepreneurial trainings for the youth of this country; if they have to be engaged in the active development of Pakistan they have to be properly introduced to the state-of-the-art innovations and economic models, necessary to develop new concepts. Awareness campaigns on SDGs should be an ongoing process. Our youth should also be familiarized with the concept of self-employment as an alternative to working for someone else; this can be achieved by acquainting them to unconventional ways of making a living and by sharing successful experiences of others.
- In universities girls should be provided with opportunities to enhance their skills for developing small sized entrepreneurs for income generation.
- Seminars should be organized to create awareness on minority rights. This also portrays a positive image of Pakistan at the international level.
- Workshops on inter-faith and inter-sect harmony and peace should be organized on university campuses to reduce religious intolerance and terrorism in our society. civil society organizations, youth and individuals should build pressure on the Government for the execution of SDGs in their true spirit.
- The implementation of SDGs will help to minimize terrorism in the country. Concerted efforts and steps should be taken to make the people of FATA aware about SDGs in this regard.
- The people of local communities in remote areas do not have any access to free and fair trials and justice. The youth in the universities should come forward and take initiatives with the help of Bargad and talk about fundamental right of all citizens.



I am interested in working for eradication of poverty, gender equality and justice for all and would like to develop teams of more like minded people who can put forward different strategies to create awareness amongst youth of today regarding SDGs. (Anum Mazher, Business Studies, Kinnaird College for Women University, Lahore)

We give our commitment on initiating a cleaning campaign in our university, once a month. (Ms. Bakhtaran and Ms. Saira Durrani, SBK Women's University, Quetta).

I want to start an awareness program in the District of Musa Khail. The youth are heavily involved in drug crimes there. I need help from Organizations like yours, and am committed to spreading knowledge about SDGs. (Ghulam Yassin Jaffer, M.A., University of Balochistan)

I strongly believe that women can play their role to spread more knowledge on different issues related to SDGs. Climate change, clean water and sanitation are very challenging issues. The discussions on these topics encouraged me a lot and I am seriously thinking to formulate a group or team who will plant trees in Karachi and other cities of Pakistan. (Ms. Tehreem Masood Mukaddam, BBA, Bahria University, Karachi Campus)

I knew nothing regarding SDG goals till now; I learnt many new concepts today, like eradication of poverty, justice and equality and gender equality. I being a debater would like to commit myself to creating awareness about the SDGs to my peers. It would be very helpful if Bargad would initiate some sort of a university exchange program and provide students like me the opportunity to be ambassadors for SDGs and spread the message around. (Ms. Masooma, Bio Technology, SBK Women's University Quetta)

We are committed to conducting research projects on SDGs and look forward to working with Bargad on future ventures as well.

I was looking for an opportunity like this; since I come from a war-torn place (Waziristan) and face terrorism on a daily basis, I highly recommend that in future SDGs related work should reach the youth from our areas, so that they could participate and benefit from it. I give my assurance that I am available for any help required. (Muhammad Amjid Khan, Political Science Department, International Islamic University)

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Way Forward: Engaging Youth for SDGs

The pilot project ended successfully but left many questions unanswered, along with very important recommendations that could be used for the implementation of the SDGs in the future.

Out of almost **2955** students only **4%** knew about SDGs. This paints a very bleak picture. Youth represents almost two thirds of the population of Pakistan hence it is important to involve them. If we are to efficaciously fulfill our national and international commitments on SDGs by 2030 with urgency. The pilot project focused on only five goals of the SDGs, however during the seminars and subsequent discussions it became eminent that Goal 4 (Quality Education) needed to be included.

In order to make headway and cater to the emerging demands that stood out in the form of recommendations from the universities, Bargad has envisioned a three-pronged strategy to mitigate limitations coming out of the seminar proceedings and results, as follows:

- Expanding its intervention in other universities and building a committed human resource
- Developing materials and establishing links with germane stakeholders
- Conducting trainings, workshops, conferences and running campaigns

First of all Bargad plans to expand its scope of interventions to universities in far flung areas including FATA as it became very obvious from multiple recommendations; they could not be part of a limited pilot project. Simultaneously, Bargad would select student ambassadors from each university to be the 'go to person' for information on SDGs.

Bargad would establish and develop links with various national and international stakeholders, including related government departments and NGO's working on SDGs. This would create well-informed opportunities to acquire and assimilate the latest information and materials on SDGs.

Bargad will identify subject matter experts (SME's) who would facilitate in developing manuals on specific goals for future trainings and workshops. Other I.E.C material will also be developed for future, conferences, trainings, workshops and seminars on the five priority areas. Bargad would capitalize on its social media presence by developing online courses on SDGs so that a much wider audience can benefit.

Bargad plans to organize three day workshops on inter-faith and inter-sect harmony and peace building due to the enormous interest shown by students through their recommendations. These trainings would be conducted in selected universities with a select group of highly motivated students for the purpose of reducing religious intolerance and terrorism in our society. They would also aid in raising awareness about SDGs amongst the students.

Tailor-made 2-3 days Entrepreneurship and Skills trainings are also in Bargad's future planning. These would also be imparted to students who are interested in developing small sized entrepreneurs for income generation; these students would also learn the latest models of economic growth and alternatives to regular employment.

Short courses on gender equality and transgender rights would also be developed and conducted in selected universities as students have very little or no knowledge on these issues.

There is an immediate and dire need to run campaigns for the conservation of water. It is imperative to engage youth from universities so that they could be trained to run pilot

projects on water conservation. Through these campaigns they would also learn the latest techniques and methods to implement SDGs in their true spirit. Bargad also intends to form a group in each university for planting trees in their respective cities. It would be a joint venture between Oxfam, Bargad and the Ministry of Climate Change. This would be an important learning lesson for the youth to connect and liaison with other stakeholders.

Media Coverage

Kinnaird College: February 12, 2018

<http://pcsw.punjab.gov.pk/node/305>
<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/280365-youths-urged-to-play-role-in-achieving-sdgs>
<https://nation.com.pk/14-Feb-2018/campaign-to-involve-youth-for-sdgs-launched>
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1389103>
<https://www.facebook.com/bargadyouth/videos/2325887790770588/>

International Islamic University: February 26, 2018

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/286067-call-for-engaging-youth-in-understanding-sdgs>
<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/02/26/speakers-call-for-engaging-youth-in-understanding-sdgs/>
<https://dailytimes.com.pk/208032/youth-play-role-helping-pakistan-achieve-development-goals/>

University of Malakand: March 7, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393892>

Lasbela University: March 16, 2018

<https://pakobserver.net/seminar-on-engaging-youth-for-sustainable-development-goals-held/>
<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1662298/1-lasbela-university-students-help-achieve-sdgs/>

SBK University: March 14, 2018

<https://e.jang.com.pk/03-19-2018/Quetta/page5.asp>
<https://www.tweet247.net/pakistan/youthforsdgs>

COMSATS University Sahiwal March 9, 2018

http://www.sahiwal.comsats.edu.pk/S_SD_G.aspx
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Bahria University Karachi: March 20, 2018

<https://nation.com.pk/E-Paper/karachi/2018-03-22/page-14/detail-2>
<https://nation.com.pk/22-Mar-2018/seminar-on-engaging-youth-for-sdgs-held>
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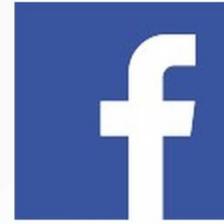
University of Education: March 29, 2018

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/03/29/seminar-on-engaging-youth-for-sdgs-held/>
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1398303>
<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/298438-students-advised-to-think-critically>
<https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/>
<http://www.thebusiness.com.pk/epaper/30-03-2018/popup.htm?p3/a003.gif>
<http://www.thebusiness.com.pk/epaper/30-03-2018/popup.htm?p3/a004.gif>

Social Media Insights

#YouthForSDGs

Platforms:



Trending Topic Dates:

26th February
14th March
16th March
20th March
29th March

#YouthForSDGs

Total tweets:
18,258

Total audience:
4,122,317

Contributors:
715

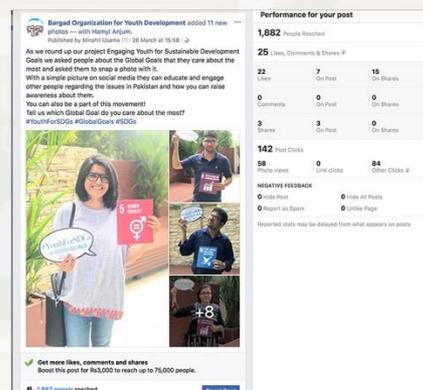
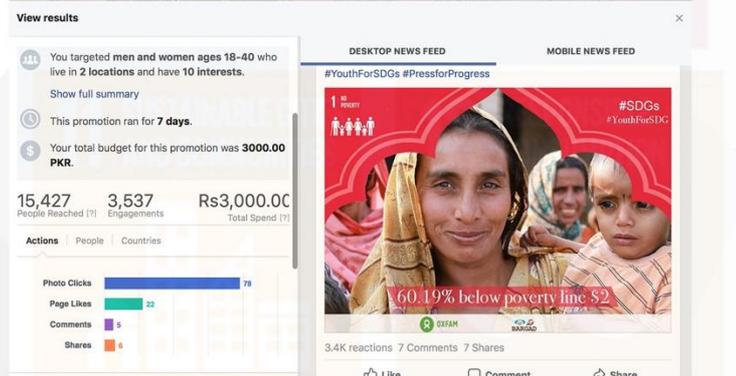
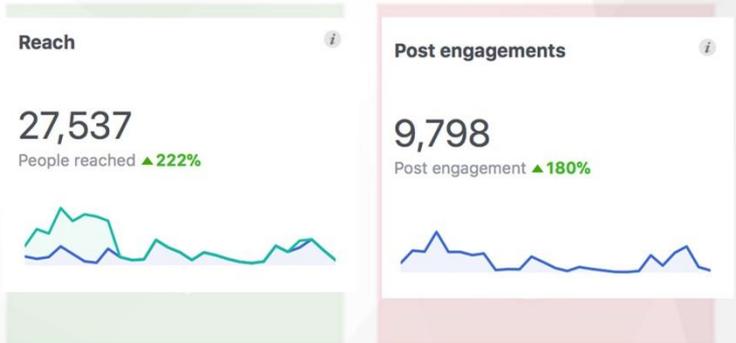
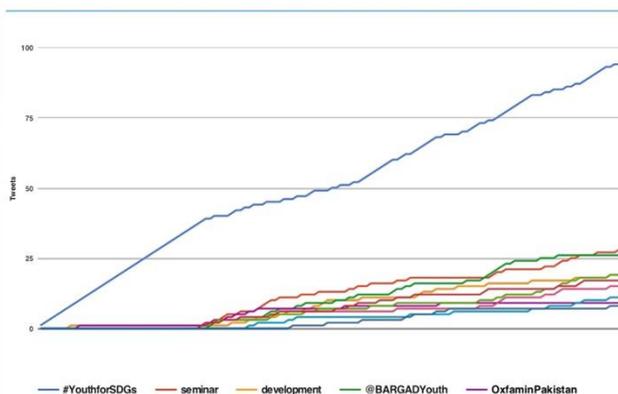
Total impressions:
12,468,521

Tweets / Contributor:
285



Geolocation

Aggregated key repeats



This **Summary & Synthesis Report** provides an overview of how students from 11 universities from across Pakistan have responded to the seminars and actions on engaging youth with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

At the outset, it has been found that only 4% of a sample of all participating students had any idea about the SDGs prior to the intervention of Bargad and Oxfam. This state of alienation from one of the most pressing development frameworks among a mass of privileged class of literate youth speaks clearly on how unprepared we are to engage youth in development and sustainability issues in the country.

The present report informs that the youth are highly aspiring, yet lag behind when it actually comes to their knowledge about substance of the SDGs. The real challenge is to fill this gap between aspirations and knowledge and maximize the existing opportunity into youth-led actions for promotion of SDGs.

Massive reception of the Bargad-Oxfam intervention in terms of participation and mainstream and social media visibility also partially can be explained by the dearth of information that exists today.

The report also duly details out key questions raised by the students and the recommendations, both general and SDGs-specific, they have made and offers a way forward.

The Project Partners



OXFAM is an international non-profit and non-governmental organization and is working in Pakistan since 1973. Oxfam's vision is a just world without poverty: a world in which people can influence decisions that affect their lives, enjoy their rights, and assume their responsibilities as full citizens of a world in which all human beings are valued and treated equally. In Pakistan, Oxfam's goal is to contribute to the eradication of poverty by supporting women and other vulnerable groups in saving lives and building livelihoods, enhancing their resilience to crises, shocks and stresses. Oxfam works with local partners, public universities and private sector to improve the lives of those living in poverty. Oxfam collaborates with Government in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets.



BARGAD is a youth organization to promote peace, justice and cooperation among youth in Pakistan. It has a long and unique standing among civil society in Pakistan having worked exclusively on youth development since 1997, when it was founded. With a large youth volunteers base throughout the country including Punjab, Bargad has implemented more than 100 short and long term projects in collaboration with various national and international development agencies of repute on youth training, mobilization and policy including provision of technical assistance to all the provincial governments of Pakistan, and regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and the State of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) for formulation and implementation of their respective youth policies.

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