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THE NGO WORLD

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF IMPACT



300,000+ **LinkedIn** 
members united for social good

One Goal, 15 Years, 300K Voices – Infinite Impact

As we mark 15 remarkable years of The NGO World LinkedIn group, we reflect on a journey of collective action, shared knowledge, and unwavering commitment to social good. From humble beginnings in December 2010, this group has grown into a vibrant community of over 300,000 members, representing changemakers, nonprofits, and humanitarian organizations from every corner of the globe.

Our shared goal has always been to foster collaboration and empower those who dedicate their lives to serving humanity.

Over the years, this platform has become a hub for exchanging ideas, sharing success stories, exploring opportunities, and showcasing innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. It is a testament to the power of community that these 300,000 voices have united to create infinite impact, reaching beyond borders to transform lives.

The strength of this group lies in its diversity. Members come from different cultures, fields, and organizations, yet are bound by a shared passion for making a difference. From case studies and breakthrough projects to capacity-building opportunities, each contribution has added value, inspiring others and setting new benchmarks for nonprofit excellence.

As we celebrate this milestone, let us reaffirm our commitment to the values that brought us together. Let us continue to innovate, collaborate, and inspire, amplifying our collective impact for a brighter and more equitable future. Together, with one goal and 300,000 voices, the possibilities are infinite.

As the owner and founder of this group, I am humbled by the dedication and enthusiasm of every member who has played a part in this journey. Your insights, participation, and collaboration have turned The NGO World into a beacon of hope for changemakers globally.

Zafar Iqbal

Editor-in-Chief, The NGO World

For queries, suggestion & feedback
editor@thengoworld.com

CHIEF EDITOR:

ZAFAR IQBAL

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In accordance with our mission to provide a platform for showcasing exceptional work on humanitarian issues and development, "The NGO World" magazine collects material from various sources, including social media pages of NGOs, development projects, UN agencies, and other related pages. We aim to bring attention to the remarkable efforts and initiatives undertaken by these organizations to create positive change in communities around the world. It is important to note that the content presented in our articles is based on publicly available information and may have been sourced from these organizations' official social media platforms or websites. We always strive to ensure accuracy and integrity in our reporting. To maintain transparency and give credit to the original sources, we include the relevant source links at the end of every article. "The NGO World" does not claim ownership of the content provided by these organizations and acknowledges their valuable contributions to the field of humanitarian work and development.

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Tweets of Social Good

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Canadian NGOs receive green light to deliver aid to North Korea

The U.N. has granted sanctions exemptions for two Canadian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to deliver soymilk production tools and supplies for a children’s hospital to North Korea.

First Steps Health Society (First Steps) and the Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCC) will have until Nov. 29 and Aug. 29, 2025, respectively, to send the aid to the DPRK, according to the [exemption notices](#) from the U.N. Security Council’s (UNSC) 1718 Sanctions Committee.

The exemptions will allow First Steps to “export soymilk production systems and food processing systems for the benefit of the civilian population of the DPRK,” according to the UNSC.

In its exemption request, First Steps also stated that it will send stainless steel soymilk cans.

“Freshly made soymilk is filtered into stainless steel soymilk cans before being delivered to North Korean kindergartens, daycares and orphanages. Stainless steel milk cans are used for their exceptional durability and hygienic properties,” the NGO wrote.

The organization plans to send the soymilk production tools to the DPRK port of Nampho, or the capital Pyongyang, while the steel milk cans will be sent via the Chinese border town of Dandong.

First Steps said in its request that the “final consignee” for the

shipment is the Korea Canada Cooperation Agency (KCCA), a North Korean organization involved in aid distribution. The NGO said county officials will be involved in the transport of the goods to production sites.

The total value of the shipment is some \$1.3 million. To make sure the aid is used for its intended purpose, First Steps said it will make “regular monitoring visits to soymilk production sites,” up to four times a year.

But it’s unclear how the NGO will monitor the aid. International organizations are [still waiting](#) to return to North Korea to reestablish in-country operations, more than three years after withdrawing their staff during the pandemic, and First Steps did not detail plans for its employees to travel to North Korea in the exemption request.

The extent of food insecurity in the DPRK [remains unclear](#) due to international observers’ inability to access the country. Several experts raised concerns about the possibility of famine-like conditions back in early 2023, but North Korea has since projected greater confidence in the food situation and NK Pro [analysis](#) points to a good harvest this year.

Meanwhile, the U.N. exemption for the second Canadian organization MCC will allow it to “engage in humanitarian activities in the DPRK” and export “metal handles and lids for buckets, fingernail clippers and safety pins.”

The value of the goods is some \$20,000, and the NGO will also be allowed to complete “two cash transfers of CAD 8,500 each for the construction of wells at two pediatric hospitals, both for the benefit of the civilian population of the DPRK.”

MCC will also send filter parts that remove “bacteria and contaminants from water for safe, clean drinking water to pediatric patients and their families suffering from chronic diarrhea,” according to its exemption request.

The nailclippers “provide pediatric patients with immediate access to basic hygiene supplies to assist in recovering from illness,” the NGO stated. It will send the goods from the U.S. state of Pennsylvania via the Chinese city of Dalian to the DPRK port city Nampho.

Source: <https://www.nknews.org/2024/12/canadian-ngos-receive-green-light-to-deliver-aid-to-north-korea/>

75% of organizations view social unrest as the greatest risk

International SOS released its [2025 Risk Outlook Report](#), highlighting the growing challenges organizations face in terms of workforce risk and resilience. The report also offers insights and predictions for prominent risks in 2025.

According to the report, 65% of senior risk professionals believe risks have increased over the past year. Furthermore, 69% believe rising geopolitical tensions will exert significant influence over their business operations or workforce in 2025. 75% of respondents view social and political unrest as the greatest risk, and 78% believe [burnout and stress](#) will

impact their business operations or workforce in the coming year.

With geopolitical tensions cited as the top concern, the report dives into key findings on the topic:

75% of respondents believe political and social unrest/protests will have impacts on their business or workforce within the next 12 months.

74% believe geopolitical events will impact their business or workforce within the next 12 months.

73% expect transportation and disruptions and risks will have a notable impact on their business or workforce within the next 12 months.

Source: <https://www.securitymagazine.com/articles/101256-75-of-organizations-view-social-unrest-as-the-greatest-risk>



Pakistan Takes Action Against Unregistered INGOs for Legal Violations

The federal government has initiated measures against two international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) - the US-based "Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids" and "Vital Strategies" - for allegedly engaging in unlawful practices, ARY News reported on Friday.

The Ministry of Interior has directed the organizations to cease operations across Pakistan, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Provincial administrations have been instructed to enforce the shutdown of their offices, while the State Bank of Pakistan has been ordered to freeze their bank accounts.

Sources revealed that both INGOs have been operating in Pakistan

for years without obtaining proper approval from the government. Despite being unregistered, they reportedly collaborated with the Ministry of Health, raising concerns over their legal compliance. Neither organization is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) or the Economic Affairs Division, as required under local laws.

This action is part of a broader governmental effort to address unregulated activities by NGOs operating outside the framework of legal requirements. By taking these measures, the government aims to ensure that all organizations adhere to the country's regulatory and compliance standards.

Source: <https://propakistani.pk/2025/01/04/government-shuts-down-two-international-ngos/>



'Absolutely the wrong path,' Türk warns against Afghanistan's ban on women in NGOs

The measure, issued by the de facto Ministry of Economy on 26 December, enforces a two-year-old decree prohibiting women from working with both national and international NGOs.

In his [statement](#), Mr. Türk emphasised the devastating impact on the delivery of critical humanitarian aid in Afghanistan the decree will have, where more than half the population lives in poverty.

NGOs, he noted, are essential to the survival of millions of Afghans, offering life-saving support to women, men and children alike.

"This is absolutely the wrong path," Mr. Türk said, urging the de facto authorities to reconsider

what he described as a "deeply discriminatory decree."

Women's rights under siege

Since coming to power, Afghanistan's de facto authorities have restricted the rights of women and girls, barring them from education, work, healthcare, and movement.

These measures, including the latest crackdown on NGO employment, effectively erase women from public life, undermining Afghanistan's prospects for progress.

Mr. Türk emphasised that "no country can progress - politically, economically or socially - while excluding half of its population from public life."

A plea to rethink the path forward

The High Commissioner called on Afghanistan's leaders to rethink their course, not just for the sake of women and girls but for the future of the nation as a whole.

He also highlighted the broader implications of these policies for the global community, noting that restricting women's participation in public life exacerbates poverty and hampers efforts to build a stable and resilient society.

"For the future of Afghanistan, the de facto authorities must change course," Mr. Türk concluded.

Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158651>

Afghanistan's Taliban rulers say will close all NGOs employing women

Ministry of Economy warns that any NGO that does not comply will have its activities suspended and its licence revoked.

The Taliban government says it will close all national and foreign nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) employing women in Afghanistan.

In a letter published on X on Sunday night, the country's Ministry of Economy warned that failure to comply with the latest order would lead to NGOs losing their licence to operate in Afghanistan.

The directive came two years after the government told NGOs to suspend the [employment of Afghan women](#), allegedly because they did not adhere to the administration's interpretation of the Islamic dress code for women.

The Economy Ministry said it was responsible for the registration, coordination, leadership and supervision of all activities carried out by national and foreign organisations.

The government was once again ordering the stoppage of all female work in institutions not controlled by the Taliban, according to the letter. "In case of lack of cooperation, all activities of that institution will be cancelled and the activity licence of that institution, granted by the ministry, will also be cancelled," it said.

Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, women have been largely erased from public spaces, prompting the United Nations to denounce the "gender apartheid" the administration has established.

Taliban authorities have [banned post-primary education](#) for girls and women, restricted employment and blocked access to parks and other public places. The group originally said the ban on post-primary education was a "temporary suspension" that would be resolved

after the establishment of a safe environment for girls to attend school, but no changes have been made so far.

Earlier this month, the UN Security Council was informed that a growing number of female Afghan humanitarian workers were being prevented from carrying out their duties, despite the critical need for relief work.

Tom Fletcher, a senior UN official, reported an increase in the number of humanitarian organisations that have had female or male staff blocked by the Taliban government.

The Taliban denies it is obstructing aid agencies or interfering with their operations, and defends its actions

as necessary to uphold the country's law, social norms and public safety.

The group also denies it has imposed complete bans on [women's activities](#) and highlighted that nearly 9,000 work permits have been issued to women since the Taliban takeover and that many women were part of the Afghan workforce.

In another development, Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhonzada has ordered that buildings should not have windows looking into places where a woman might sit or stand.

According to a four-clause decree posted on X over the weekend, the order applies to new buildings as well as existing ones.

Windows should not overlook or look into areas like yards or kitchens. Where a window looks into such a space, then the person responsible for that property must find a way to obscure this view to "remove harm," by installing a wall, fence or screen.

Municipalities and other authorities must supervise the construction of new buildings to avoid installing windows that look into or over residential properties, the decree added.

A recent law prohibits Afghan women from singing or reciting poetry in public. Some local radio and television stations have also stopped broadcasting female voices.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/30/afghanistans-taliban-rulers-say-will-close-all-ngos-employing-women>

Rahnuma-FPAP Empowers Communities in Balochistan and Punjab through FP&RH Awareness and Medical Camps



Rahnuma-FPAP Balochistan and Punjab Regions, in collaboration with the UNFPA (DFAT & PRM) Project, recently organized a series of Community Outreach Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP&RH) awareness sessions and medical camps. These activities were held in Muzaffargarh, Killa Saifullah, Loralai, Chaghi, Noshki, Pishin, and Quetta, targeting vulnerable and underserved communities.

The sessions aimed to empower community members by addressing critical issues such as Family Planning and Reproductive Health, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE). Participants were sensitized to the importance of FP&RH and the resources available to improve their well-being, while also gaining valuable insights into preventing GBV and enhancing their life skills.

Through these outreach efforts, Rahnuma-FPAP successfully reached

and benefited over 1,500 individuals, providing them with essential health services and equipping them with knowledge to make informed decisions about their health and rights. The medical camps offered on-the-spot consultations and services, ensuring immediate care for those in need.

These initiatives underscore Rahnuma-FPAP's commitment to addressing pressing social challenges and promoting sustainable development. By raising awareness and delivering critical resources, the organization is contributing to improved health outcomes and greater gender equality in these regions.

Rahnuma-FPAP encourages continued collaboration among stakeholders to expand such initiatives, ensuring that more underserved communities receive the support and services they deserve. Together, these efforts can build healthier, empowered, and more resilient societies.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>

NGO steps-up efforts to curb increasing rate of child abuse

An international NGO, Secours Islamique France (SIF), has trained stakeholders on child safeguarding to curb the increasing rate of abuse on children in Zamfara.

Declaring open a one-day training in Gusau on Tuesday, the SIF Country Programme Manager, Amina Muhammad, described child safeguarding as a collective responsibility.

Muhammad noted that the training was part of child safeguarding activity implementation aimed at engaging communities and identifying various risks associated with children.

"This session is an annual event to reflect on our activities in child safeguarding and aim to strengthen the efforts of relevant stakeholders on preventive measures in child abuse," she said.

According to her, child safeguarding is a responsibility of all stakeholders, including parents, government agencies, security organisations, communities, and individuals, among others.

"This training is aimed at empowering communities with knowledge to keep children safe and protected.

"Based on the reports available to us, there is a serious increase in child abuse ranging from rape to physical assaults on boys and girls, especially in Gusau, the state capital," she confirmed.



She identified vulnerability, negligence from parents and caregivers, hawking, street begging, poverty, and the scourge of economic hardship as some of the factors responsible for child abuse.

"Most of the challenges affecting our children in society are heartbreaking issues, and most of them are not reported to appropriate authorities.

"Therefore, this training is a wake-up call to all stakeholders so that the general public can be sensitised in order to break the culture of silence in society," she said.

The country director urged the stakeholders to use their positions at various levels in promoting child safeguarding in the state.

Also speaking, the Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Bashir Abubakar, described the training as apt and encouraging.

"This training is timely and a welcome development considering its impact on the protection of our children.

"On behalf of the participants of this training, I assure our commitment to implement and put to use all the knowledge acquired towards safeguarding children in our respective communities," Abubakar noted.

He assured the determination of the state ministry for humanitarian affairs and disaster management in implementing child safeguarding laws.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the training was attended by representatives from security agencies, government Organisations, the National Human Rights Commission, health personnel, media, and women associations, among others.

Source: <https://quicknews-africa.net/ngo-steps-up-efforts-to-curb-increasing-rate-of-child-abuse/>

The Humanitarian Sector's Complicity in Silencing Palestinian Liberation

The humanitarian sector in Palestine has perpetuated harm under the guise of aid, especially during the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Since the Oslo Accords in 1993, international NGOs have fragmented Palestinian grassroots movements, depoliticized the struggle for liberation, and fostered dependency on foreign aid tied to donor agendas.

These organizations frame Palestinian oppression as a "development" or "humanitarian" issue, sidelining the structural violence of Israeli occupation. Aid distribution prioritizes foreign interests, avoiding accountability for Israel's war crimes and erasing Palestinian political agency. Grassroots resistance, once united, has

been replaced by NGO-defined "empowerment," tied to funding that discourages political organizing and self-censorship.

The sector's complicity is evident in its actions: partnering with Israeli groups, prioritizing donor approval over Palestinian voices, and hiring practices steeped in anti-Palestinian bias. Palestinians are seen as "too emotional" or "biased," and their narratives are sanitized to align with the status quo.

The author, a former NGO worker, recounts experiences of gaslighting

and erasure. From the suppression of truthful reports to accusations of unprofessionalism for being Palestinian, these incidents highlight systemic racism within the sector. In one instance, they were asked how they would "separate" their Palestinian identity from their work—a stark reflection of the industry's hypocrisy.

Palestinians deserve better than institutions that perpetuate their oppression. The author urges Palestinian NGO workers to reject this broken system and build alternatives rooted in justice and liberation. Only by reclaiming their narrative can Palestinians truly fight for freedom on their terms.

Source: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/palestine-international-ngos-racialise-silence-civil-society-how>



International collective action

Qatar is keen to contribute to the efforts by the global community to maintain international peace and security in line with its strategic partnership with the United Nations. The country plays an active role in promotion of human rights, humanitarian assistance, and participates in collective action to address existing and emerging challenges facing the world. It is omnipresent in most of the United Nations activities and in regional and international groups working on finding solutions to regional and international crises, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. It is one of the troop-contributing countries participating in the United Nations peacekeeping missions. As a contribution by Qatar to regional and international efforts, Doha has hosted conferences, meetings and workshops for the promotion of international peace and security, democracy, human rights and international peace. Qatar celebrated International Human Solidarity Day on December 20. It believes in the importance of solidarity and international collective action and is at the forefront of efforts aimed at confronting various international challenges and crises. The country plays a leading role in humanitarian response and peacemaking in the region and the world. As part of UN Sustainable Development Goals, Qatar attaches great importance to sustainable development at

the national and international levels. It recognises that achieving sustainable development is a challenge for the countries and the international community must unitedly address it. The country provides humanitarian and development assistance both at the bilateral level and through the United Nations all over the world, especially to the developing countries facing crises and natural disasters, through the Qatar Development Fund and the Department of International Development at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In view of its significant humanitarian contributions, the country is a member of the Board of the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. Promotion and protection of human rights constitute the main pillar of Qatar's policy. This approach has been highlighted in Qatar National Vision 2030 that includes sections dealing with human rights in education, health, the environment, labour rights, empowerment of women and the rights of the child. The country is keen to support the United Nations organisations and enabling them to carry out their tasks and achieve the objectives for which they were established. Qatar has made voluntary contributions to many United Nations funds and programmes for poverty alleviation, providing basic education, and emergency response to disasters and crises. During the period from 2000 to 2014, Qatar made contributions to more than 41 entities of the United Nations.

Source: <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/editorial/23/12/2024/international-collective-action>

Mzukuzuku ADC summons NGOs for accountability

The Mzukuzuku Area Development Committee (ADC), led by Chairperson Flemmings Zgambo, has taken a bold step to ensure accountability among non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the area.

The committee has summoned all NGOs working within the community, requiring them to justify their activities and demonstrate their impact.

In an interview with Malawi24, Zgambo expressed the committee's growing concerns over the lack of tangible results from several NGOs claiming to support the community.

"Our committee has found that most organizations claiming to help our area are doing nothing on the ground," Zgambo stated. "As the Mzukuzuku Development Committee, we have written to all organizations operating in our area to come and explain their activities. If they fail to appear and provide

convincing explanations, we will ask them to leave our area because this is not a place to misuse funds."

According to Zgambo, the decision follows the committee's discovery that many NGOs are failing to deliver on their commitments, despite receiving funding intended to benefit the local population.

The move has sparked discussions among community members and local stakeholders, with many supporting the committee's efforts to ensure resources are used effectively.

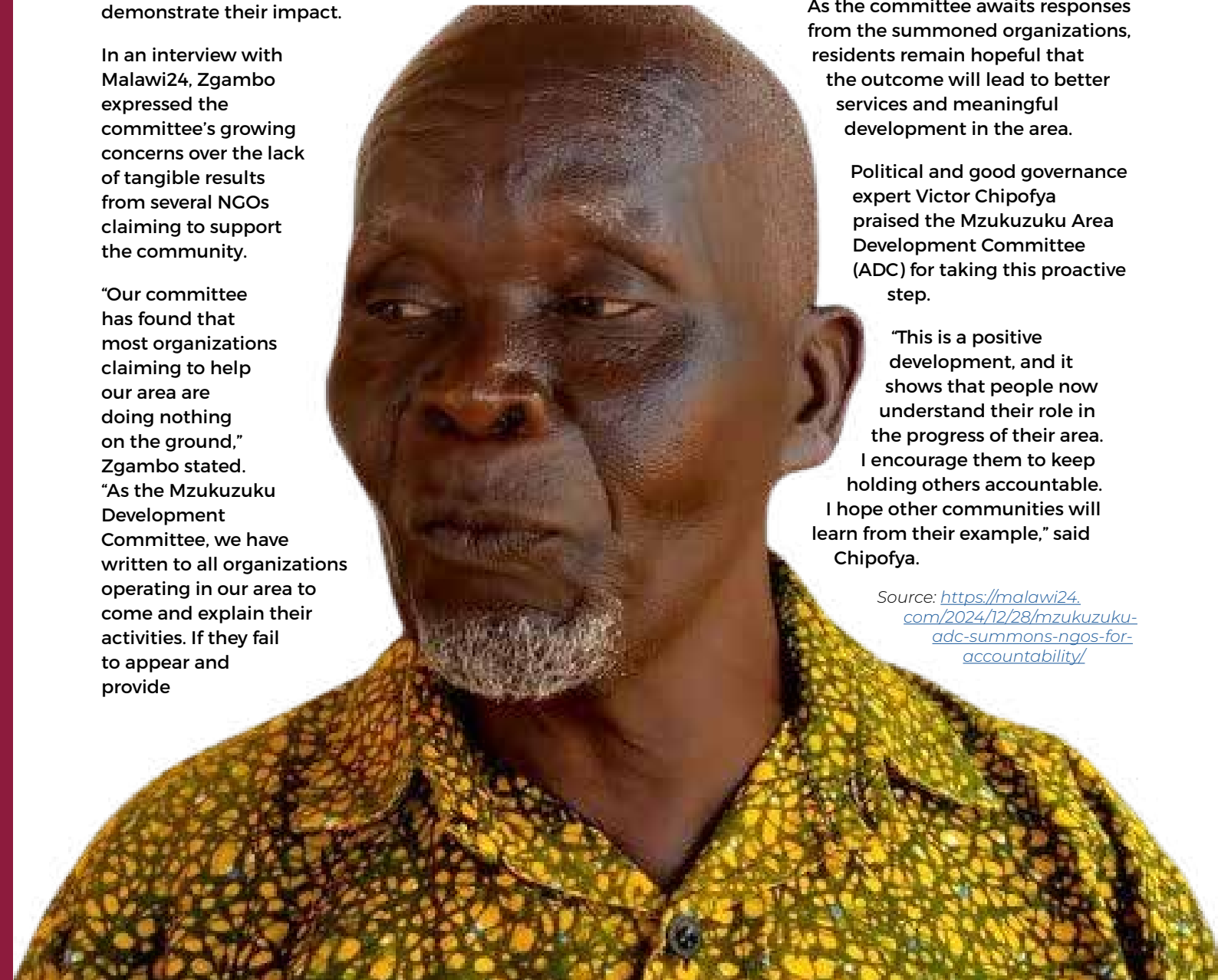
The Mzukuzuku Development Committee's actions highlight the growing demand for transparency and accountability in NGO operations across Malawi.

As the committee awaits responses from the summoned organizations, residents remain hopeful that the outcome will lead to better services and meaningful development in the area.

Political and good governance expert Victor Chipofya praised the Mzukuzuku Area Development Committee (ADC) for taking this proactive step.

"This is a positive development, and it shows that people now understand their role in the progress of their area. I encourage them to keep holding others accountable. I hope other communities will learn from their example," said Chipofya.

Source: <https://malawi24.com/2024/12/28/mzukuzuku-adc-summons-ngos-for-accountability/>



Falastine Saleh – How international NGOs racialise and silence Palestinian civil society

The humanitarian sector's role in Palestine has always been problematic, but its failures have become glaringly evident during the ongoing genocide in Gaza. After the 1993 Oslo Accords, international donors and NGOs arrived under the pretense of “state-building,” using terms like “empowerment” and “development.” While they claimed to help, their actions often undermined the Palestinian liberation struggle.

These organizations depoliticized the Palestinian cause, shifting attention from Israeli occupation's structural violence to technical issues framed as “development.” They reduced the fight for freedom to apolitical goals like “capacity building,” sidelining the root causes of Palestinian suffering. Today, as Gaza faces genocide, humanitarian organizations scramble to distribute aid while avoiding naming Israel's war crimes, perpetuating the cycle of oppression.

NGOs fractured Palestinian civil society, which was once led by grassroots movements united against colonialism. By introducing donor-driven frameworks, these organizations compartmentalized collective resistance. Grassroots groups fighting for survival and freedom were reduced to projects seeking donor approval for narrowly defined “empowerment.” Dependency on foreign funding came with strings attached, discouraging political organizing and silencing criticism of Israeli colonialism. To maintain funding, Palestinian NGOs self-censored,

becoming complicit in a system that reinforced oppression.

Humanitarian organizations also stepped into roles legally required of the occupying power, further enabling Israeli policies. While claiming to support justice, they helped maintain the very structures of oppression.

These failures became personal for me during my work in the advocacy department of a major international NGO. I witnessed blatant erasure of Palestinian voices and complicity in reinforcing power imbalances. One glaring example was the organization's partnership with an Israeli group, a decision made without consulting Palestinian staff. Despite objections, regional management prioritized donor relations and appeased Zionist stakeholders, dismissing Palestinian concerns.

Every statement from our department faced rigorous “sign-off processes” designed to dilute or censor criticism of Israel. A European staff member was hired specifically to approve all communications, blocking language that named Israeli war crimes and imposing false equivalences. Palestinian experiences and perspectives were consistently devalued in favor of narratives

that protected the organization's interests.

This racism wasn't limited to policies—it infiltrated workplace culture and hiring practices. In a job interview with another NGO, I was asked how I would “separate being Palestinian from the work.” My identity and lived experience

were treated as liabilities, while the organization's political “neutrality” was prioritized over truth.

Such encounters reveal a sector that silences Palestinians while claiming to advocate for justice. Palestinians are dismissed as “too emotional” or “biased,” while NGOs demand neutrality that aligns with the status quo. This hypocrisy is unbearable, especially as Palestinians endure genocide in Gaza while being excluded from meaningful roles in the humanitarian sector.

I've chosen to leave this sector, using my skills elsewhere without compromising my values. I encourage other Palestinian workers to do the same. The humanitarian system, as it stands, is incapable of change—it was never designed to support liberation.

Palestinians deserve better. We will fight for justice and freedom on our own terms, without relying on a system that perpetuates our oppression.

Source: <https://braveneweuropa.com/falastine-saleh-how-international-ngos-racialise-and-silence-palestinian-civil-society>



IFES and PDMA Baluchistan Join Hands to Strengthen Disaster Governance

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Pakistan and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Balochistan, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under USAID's Citizen Engagement Program: Building Understanding and Involvement in Local Governance and Democracy (BUILD).

This partnership underscores a shared commitment to strengthening governance frameworks and enhancing institutional capabilities to tackle humanitarian crises effectively. Through this collaboration, IFES will provide technical assistance to PDMA Balochistan, focusing on

institutional capacity-building and educating communities on climate and disaster resilience.

The initiative aims to reinforce climate and disaster governance in Balochistan, a region vulnerable to climate-related challenges and natural disasters. By prioritizing inclusive community engagement, the program aspires to build more resilient communities that are better equipped to mitigate and respond to crises.

“This partnership is a significant step towards fostering sustainable governance and creating a safer, more informed Balochistan,” said representatives from IFES and PDMA at the MoU signing ceremony.

The collaboration highlights the importance of integrating community education and institutional strengthening to address the dual challenges of climate change and disaster preparedness. By leveraging IFES's expertise and PDMA's operational framework, the initiative will contribute to more effective disaster management strategies while promoting community involvement in local governance.

This MoU signifies a meaningful stride towards resilience-building and governance improvement in one of Pakistan's most vulnerable regions.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ifes1987/posts/?feedView=all>

Surge in Female Executions in Iran Highlights Gender Inequality and Judicial Injustice

Iran Human Rights (IHR), a Norway-based organization monitoring executions in Iran, reported a significant increase in the number of women hanged in the country in 2024, marking the highest since the group began documenting capital punishment in 2008. According to IHR, at least 241 women were executed between 2010 and 2024, primarily for drug offenses and murder, with many cases tied to domestic violence or sexual abuse.

Rising Executions and Their Context

IHR highlighted a sharp rise in hangings in 2024, with October recording at least 166 executions, the highest for a single month since records began. Activists accuse Iran's authorities, led by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, of using executions as a tool to instill fear in society, particularly following the widespread protests of 2022-2023.

The organization noted that of the 241 women executed over the last 14 years, 114 were convicted of murder and 107 for drug-related offenses. Alarming, 70% of women executed for murder had been convicted of killing their husbands or partners, often in cases involving domestic violence or abuse.

Systemic Gender Discrimination

IHR Director Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam condemned the executions, emphasizing the systemic

gender inequality in Iran's judicial system. He stated, "The execution of women in Iran not only reveals the brutal and inhumane nature of the death penalty but also exposes the deep-rooted gender discrimination and inequality within the judicial system."

Iran's Islamic law of retribution, known as qisas, dictates that a life must be taken for a killing unless the victim's family forgives the perpetrator or accepts financial compensation. However, this system often disregards extenuating



circumstances, such as domestic violence, as mitigating factors in sentencing.

Cases Reflecting Judicial Injustice

IHR cited numerous cases illustrating the harsh realities faced by women in Iran's judicial system. For example, Zahra Esmaili, forced into marriage with her rapist, was subjected to severe abuse by her husband. Convicted of murdering him in 2017, she was executed in 2021 after his

family demanded qisas. Reports indicate that Esmaili suffered a heart attack after witnessing other executions, but authorities still hung her lifeless body.

Another prominent case is that of Reyhaneh Jabbari, a 26-year-old executed in 2014 for the alleged murder of a former intelligence officer she said tried to sexually assault her. Her story gained international attention and was the subject of the acclaimed documentary *Seven Winters* in Tehran, showcased at the 2023 Berlin Film Festival.

Broader Implications

Activists argue that many women sentenced to death in Iran acted out of desperation, often as victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse. IHR has criticized the judicial system for its failure to recognize these circumstances as mitigating factors and for perpetuating gender inequality.

The alarming rise in executions, coupled with cases like Esmaili and Jabbari, underscores the urgent need for judicial reforms and greater international pressure on Iran to address systemic injustices. According to IHR, these executions not only violate human rights but also highlight the deep-seated gender discrimination embedded within the country's legal framework.

Source: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250106-iran-executed-over-30-women-in-2024-ngo>

EAPN Hosts Workshop on Tackling In-Work Poverty with The Adecco Group

In December, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), in collaboration with The Adecco Group, hosted a pivotal workshop titled "Making Work a Safe Road Out of Poverty". The event served as a reflective journey, engaging employers and stakeholders to raise awareness about the complexities of poverty, including in-work poverty, and exploring strategies for addressing this pressing issue.

The workshop brought together distinguished speakers, including Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Olivier Bontout from the European Commission (DG Employment), and Andrea

Garnero, OECD Coordinator for the Green Transition. Their insightful contributions laid the groundwork for dynamic discussions on the multi-dimensional relationship between work and poverty.

The event featured thematic sessions led by experts addressing critical aspects of in-work poverty. Alex Quinn (European Youth Forum) highlighted work precarity, Jo Bothmer (EAPN NL) examined work intensity, Helder Ferreira (EAPN ES) discussed decent wages, and Andrew Hayes (ATD Fourth World) explored discrimination faced by those experiencing poverty. Renata Krause (EAPN DE) and Gunou Mahmoud (EAPN NL) shared

powerful personal testimonies, providing a human perspective to the discussions.

The workshop concluded with a commitment to fostering concrete collaborations in 2025. EAPN and The Adecco Group expressed gratitude to the participating companies—SUEZ, BNP Paribas, Inditex, and ISS Facility Services Belgium & Luxembourg—for their support and involvement.

Interested in joining future discussions? Contact Bruce Roch or Juliana S. for more information. Together, we can create meaningful solutions to in-work poverty and build a fairer society.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-anti-poverty-network/posts/?feedView=all>



University of Dhaka Launches Applied Democracy Lab with USAID and IFES Support

The Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Dhaka, proudly inaugurated the Applied Democracy Lab (ADL) today, a significant milestone made possible through the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), Washington, D.C.

The ceremony, held at the University of Dhaka, was graced by the presence of the Honourable Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Niaz Ahmed Khan, alongside Dr. Reed J. Aeschliman, Mission Director, USAID Bangladesh. Students and faculty members from various departments also joined the event, reflecting

the lab's cross-disciplinary appeal and its potential to engage a broad academic community.

The ADL is envisioned as a vibrant hub for fostering research, dialogue, and innovation in the field of democracy and governance. It aims to empower students and scholars with tools and knowledge to address contemporary democratic challenges while encouraging applied research and civic engagement.

During the event, Professor Dr. Niaz Ahmed Khan highlighted the lab's transformative potential for promoting democratic values and practices within Bangladesh. Dr. Reed J. Aeschliman commended

the initiative, emphasizing USAID's commitment to advancing education and democracy worldwide.

The inauguration marks the beginning of a promising journey for the Applied Democracy Lab, which aspires to become a leading center for academic and practical contributions to democratic development in the region. The ADL stands as a testament to the power of collaborative efforts in strengthening democratic governance and civic empowerment.



Muslim Aid Pakistan Strengthens Ties with Governor KP to Expand Humanitarian Efforts

Asif Chishti, Head of Operations at Muslim Aid Pakistan (MAP), recently met with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Khan Kundi, to discuss MAP's ongoing humanitarian and development initiatives across the province.

During the meeting, Mr. Chishti provided an overview of MAP's completed and ongoing projects, emphasizing the organization's comprehensive efforts in emergency response, rehabilitation, and community development. Key focus areas include WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), livelihoods and entrepreneurship, housing support, and seasonal interventions such as food distribution, winter

kits, and Qurbani programs. These initiatives reflect MAP's steadfast commitment to supporting vulnerable communities and addressing their immediate and long-term needs.

The discussion also highlighted MAP's future plans to extend its support to marginalized districts within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ensuring that underserved populations benefit from targeted and impactful programs. Mr. Chishti reiterated MAP's dedication to building sustainable solutions that empower communities and improve their quality of life.

Governor Faisal Khan Kundi expressed his appreciation for Muslim Aid's contributions to the

province and offered valuable suggestions to enhance the organization's outreach. He recommended closer collaboration with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society to effectively reach hard-hit and underserved areas.

Muslim Aid Pakistan is grateful for the Governor's continued support and guidance, which strengthens its ability to serve those in need. The meeting underscores MAP's commitment to fostering partnerships that drive positive change and enhance the well-being of communities across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/muslimaidpakistan/posts/?feedView=all>





Young entrepreneurs turn business ideas into reality

Hundreds of young entrepreneurs from across Northern Ireland have been putting their business skills to the test at the annual Young Enterprise NI Big Market.

Many of the 130 student companies from 80 schools and colleges chose to create business plans with a sustainability message at their core and used social media to advertise their attendance.

The event - the biggest yet - was open to the public and a judging panel of business leaders at St George's Market in central Belfast.

It was part of the Young Enterprise NI's entrepreneurship programme, which aims to give young people the experience of starting a real business, with students given the task of creating a product to sell.

Ballymena Academy's 'Coastify' enterprise team took to TikTok

to promote their coasters and experience, with one post attracting 263.1K views.

The social media team said the platform was important for attracting their target market.

"It definitely benefited us, a lot of people said that they recognised us from the TikTok", they said.

Wallace High School from Lisburn repurposed fishing nets which had been dumped in Lough Neagh.

They cleaned and prepped the nets and paired them with beads made from recycled beach plastic to create bracelets.

The team hoped to raise awareness of the amount of nets often made from nylon plastic polluting Lough Neagh and entering the oceans each year.

Digital technology director Nathan said: "Lough Neagh is full of

ghost net waste, and we thought we'd clear it up and recycle and repurpose it.

"One of our team members' dads knew a fisherman who was able to supply it to us, and we got lots of it."

Involvement with the Young Enterprise Entrepreneurship Programme begins in September and runs until Easter, when companies compete in a Northern Ireland-wide competition.

Cambridge House Grammar School in Ballymena wanted to "make a difference" with the vision of reducing the amount of clothes ending up in landfill.

They converted old, unwanted clothes into fashion in the form of bags and bows.

The team said using unwanted clothes had also benefited profit margins with "all production costs covered".

St Patrick's High School, Keady, attended the event for the first time with five business groups focusing on sustainability.

Jolly Jars upcycled glass jars, converting them into dishwasher-safe drinking jars.

St Patrick's High School teacher Mrs Conlon said

preparing for the event had been a brilliant experience, providing students with "a real taste of the real world".

"Having targets, meeting targets, getting the selling price, what's going to work, what's not going to work, they ran some test runs in school to see what would work, design process - you can't teach that, that has to come from experience", she said.

'The post-pandemic generation'

Carol Fitzsimons, chief executive of Young Enterprise NI has been involved in organising the showcase for more than 10 years.

"This is the biggest year we've ever had", she said.

"It's very exciting because it's the first time these students have got to sell their goods to the public and showcase them to business leaders."

She said the entrepreneurship programme was critical

for developing the skills employers need.

"We're very conscious that this is the post-pandemic generation so a lot of these young people had their schooling disrupted," she said.

"What we would hear in terms of mental health and their skills is that they have struggled to develop softer skills around relationship building, teamwork and communication".

Funding pressures

[Young Enterprise NI's funding](#) from the Department of Education was cut with immediate effect in 2023.

Ms Fitzsimons said funding pressures would ultimately determine how the charity could support young people in the future.

"We've lost all of our public funding, we have half the income we used to have," she said.

"Whilst it's brilliant to have the business community supporting we really need a level of public sector support for this work."

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2y718vq72o>



500 youths benefit from PowerUp Entrepreneurship Programme

The PowerUp Entrepreneurship Programme 5.0, an initiative by Access Bank, in collaboration with NerdzFactory Foundation, successfully empowered young Nigerians with essential entrepreneurial skills, enabling them to bridge the gap between ideation and actualisation.

The programme equipped participants with the tools and knowledge needed to start and grow sustainable businesses, providing them with access to economic opportunities.

It took a holistic approach to enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of its participants. It comprised several key components, including the PowerUp Webinar, PowerUp BootCamp, and PowerUp Demo-Day. Each of these elements was carefully crafted to cultivate essential skills and provide practical business knowledge, empowering participants to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape confidently.

Participants gained insights into critical areas

such as Digital Marketing, Financial Management, designing a pitch deck and effectively pitching their business ideas, developing comprehensive business plans and models, generating funds for their businesses, and branding. These topics were integral to fostering a well-rounded understanding of entrepreneurship and ensuring participants were well-prepared for real-world challenges.

The PowerUp Entrepreneurship Programme adopted a hybrid training model, combining both physical and virtual sessions to maximise accessibility for participants.

Highlighting the impact of the programme, which was open to a diverse groups, including young graduates, final-year students, unemployed youth, NYSC Corps members, girls aged 18-35, aspiring entrepreneurs and existing entrepreneurs, Director at NerdzFactory Foundation, Ade' Olowojoba, harped on the vital role

of cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset among Nigerian youths.

He said: "As our economic landscape continues to evolve, empowering young people with the skills and knowledge to navigate these changes is essential. The PowerUp Programme serves as a dynamic platform that enables aspiring entrepreneurs to discover and seize business opportunities, equipping them with the tools they need to thrive and succeed in their ventures."

The programme promised a host of benefits, including increased youth participation in entrepreneurship, support in identifying business opportunities that can be initiated with minimal capital, improved access to finance for existing businesses, and the development of vital business skills. Additionally, the programme promoted collaboration and networking, creating job opportunities and contributing to economic growth.

Read more at: https://guardian.ng/news/500-youths-benefit-from-powerup-entrepreneurship-programme/#google_vignette



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Leadership and Women's Empowerment in Iraq's Security Sector

Empowering women in Iraq's security sector remains challenging due to societal and institutional resistance rooted in traditional gender roles. Conservative norms often limit women's participation under the guise of protection, neglecting critical issues like domestic violence. Despite these obstacles, women's empowerment in the security sector is vital for breaking entrenched barriers, fostering economic independence, and challenging traditional masculinity.

A pivotal step was a four-day training session for 24 senior leaders from Iraq's Ministry of Interior (MOI)

and Ministry of Defense (MOD). Participants explored their roles in promoting gender equality, addressing stereotypes, and creating inclusive environments. Insights from male leaders highlighted the importance of leadership in women's inclusion. For example, Brigadier Ali Hasan Ali noted how early resistance to female leadership in MOI transformed through persistent adaptation, while Brigadier Adnan Hmood emphasized that male leadership enhances recruitment, mentorship, and collaboration, improving the quality of security services.

Key strategies identified to advance women's empowerment include raising awareness about gender equality, fostering inclusive leadership, implementing supportive policies, and celebrating success stories to inspire change.

Men's involvement is crucial in accelerating progress, ensuring women's voices are respected, and fostering a security sector that reflects the needs of all Iraqis. Through collaboration, commitment, and advocacy, Iraq can build a more equitable and secure future where women's contributions are integral to societal and institutional advancement.

Source: <https://www.undp.org/iraq/blog/leadership-and-womens-empowerment-iraqs-security-sector>



NGO builds school for orphans in Katsina

USA-based NGO, Islamic Ummah Relief (IUR), has constructed an orphanage home and a school for orphans and other less privileged children in Katsina State.

The facility is designed to offer sound and standard education to the orphans as well as the less privileged children in society.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the facility, which is named "The Magnet Academy At Alhuda," has a motto: "Nurturing the minds and spirit of our future generation."

Commissioning the edifice, Gov. Dikko Radda applauded the group's foresight for initiating such projects for the benefit of orphans and other less privileged children in society.

"What we saw today is something that touched our hearts.

"The IUR Chairman told us that he grew up as an orphan and was taken care of by his mother until Almighty Allah gave him the opportunity to go to America for study, after which he resided there.

"He didn't forget what happened to him when he was young. That's why he established the school in Katsina. In fact, this school is among the comprehensive schools that everyone would want to send their child to," he said.

Radda, therefore, thanked the chairman for the initiative and urged other people to emulate the gesture by supporting orphans to also achieve their potential in life, just like other children.

Earlier, the IUR Chairman, Mr. Zahradeen Ibrahim-Hassan, said that "he is an indigene of Katsina State but resides in America."

According to him, the NGO is also working in other countries like Ghana, Niger, and Uganda.

"IUR now focuses attention on orphans from four to six years old, to give them not only a sense of belonging but also to pave the way for them to achieve their potential in the future.

"We want to give them sound education, considering how the North is left behind in western education, while economic constraints affect the education of such children.

Read more at: <https://guardian.ng/news/ngo-builds-school-for-orphans-in-katsina/>



Niger: NGO visits IDPs camp, advocates girl-child education

High Level Women Advocacy (HiLWA), has over the weekend visited the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp to assess the living conditions and education of the girl-child in the camp.

President of HiLWA in Niger State, Hajiya Hassana Adamu, led a delegation to the IDPs camp at Central Primary School, Gwada, in Shiroro Local Government Area of the state.

HiLWA is a non-governmental organisation that sensitise rural communities on the importance of girl-child education.

Adamu explained that the visit was to assess the living standards and education of out-of-school children, particularly the female ones.

Adamu said, "HiLWA's focus is on promoting girl-child education, and the organisation expresses concern

over the lack of guidance and counselling for the girls".

She also observed that the girls in the IDPs camp were not exposed to the importance of education, highlighting that HiLWA would take the issue up with the Chairman Niger State Universal Basic Education(NSUBEB).

"Although we sensitised the girls on the benefits of education, there is need for alternative location for the IDPs instead of the school premises," she added.

She stated further that the organisation also plans to advocate for the provision of guidance and counsellors to educate the girls on the importance of education.

The Head Mistress of Central Primary School, Gwada, Mrs. Justina Barde, informed the delegation

that the IDPs presence in the school premises was affecting the education of pupils.

She also highlighted the accommodation challenges, noting that six families, including males and females, live in a single classroom, posing a danger to the female children.

Some of the girls who spoke, Rita Iliya and Jennifer Nehemiah, expressed their desire to become medical doctor and a tailor, respectively, despite their irregular attendance at school.

The organisation presented items, including cartons of biscuits, detergents, soap, and bags of pure water, to the IDPs.

The delegation included female Permanent Secretaries, officials from the Adolescent Girls' Child Education (AGILE), and the Niger state Child Rights Agency.

Source: https://tribuneonlineng.com/niger-ngo-visits-idps-camp-advocates-girl-child-education/#google_vignette



Archana Jain: The Visionary Behind Florian Foundation, Transforming Lives Through Education, Empowerment, and Compassion

Source: <https://www.aninews.in/news/business/archana-jain-the-visionary-behind-florian-foundation-transforming-lives-through-education-empowerment-and-compassion20241228114502/>

New Delhi [India], December 28: Mumbai based Archana Jain is an inspiration to many privileged men and women. She has been a well-known social - entrepreneur. Being the founder of the Florian Foundation NGO, her aim is to work for the betterment of underprivileged people and to feed the hungry in India.

As a Business and Social Entrepreneur she has started her Organization to work with underprivileged children, youth and women and their families with an aim to help them pursue a better standard of life and better future.

Since her NGO Florian Foundation inception, she has been helping underprivileged people, a number of children and young women. Through her works, Florian Foundation and Archana Jain have made a significant contribution to humanity. The objective of her NGO is to provide a better future to those who can't have

it. Her organization looks into the empowerment of women, quality education for children, [food donation](#) and much more.

She has been active as a social worker for the past 10 years and has done numerous social activities to change human lives. Over the year, she has organized a number of food drives, education-related initiatives, campaigns and social activities. Being a passionate woman herself, she has generously contributed a lot to the lives of several women seeking professional assistance. Her main goal is to help women become independent by helping them set up their own small business units. Almost all of her initiatives for social causes are self-funded. She and her team relentlessly work towards a better and brighter future for young India.

The Florian Foundation is an NGO dedicated to providing basic needs to underprivileged citizens and quality education to young minds, Sustainable [Development Goals](#), focusing on education, healthcare, and empowerment.

The foundation's initiatives include:

- **Education Program:** Providing quality education to underprivileged children, fostering their academic growth and lifelong learning opportunities.
- **Health Program:** Delivering essential healthcare services, medical support, and nutritional assistance to underserved communities.
- **Women Empowerment Program:** Enhancing the social, economic, and personal development of women, enabling them to lead empowered and independent lives.



Menstrual care technics: NGO gives menstrual hygiene packages to 7000 secondary school girls in 10 schools

The Vestal Egbukole Foundation (VEF) has provided menstrual care packages and hygiene training to 7,000 secondary school girls in 10 schools within the Owerri zone of Imo State. This initiative, called the "Caring for the Girl Child Initiative," was launched to mark the seventh anniversary of Ugoeze Vestal Egbukole, late mother of Eze of Egbu, and aims to promote health, confidence, and gender equality.

Led by health professionals, the program delivered disposable and reusable sanitary pads, along with notepads and pens to encourage education. Demonstrations on proper pad use and hygiene practices were conducted, and girls were educated on menstruation as a natural process, emphasizing the importance of self-care and hygiene to reduce infection risks and eliminate stigma.

VEF, founded by Ikenna Egbukole to honor his mother's legacy, has

been empowering women and girls since 2019. It launched the Female Entrepreneurship Scheme, supporting 20 women with ₦120,000 each to grow their businesses. Additionally, the NGO provided nearly 1,000 women with monetary assistance and palliatives during crises. Collaborating with the Eze Mitchell Egbukole Foundation, it champions youth entrepreneurship, having funded ₦54.5 million for 59 beneficiaries in 2024 alone.

The initiative received high praise from school leaders and students, who expressed gratitude for the education and resources provided. VEF's impactful efforts continue to empower girls, reduce poverty, and drive transformative change, fostering a brighter future for communities.

Source: <https://businessday.ng/news/article/menstrual-care-technics-ngo-gives-menstrual-hygiene-packages-to-7000-secondary-school-girls-in-10-schools-in-imo-state/>

Literacy rate: NGO harps on increased funding of education

A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Education Advancement Initiative (EAI), based in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), has called for increased funding of the educational sector in order to improve the literacy rate among citizens for a peaceful co-existence and socio-economic development of the nation.

The NGO, which also decried the none release of over N300 billion universities revitalization fund captured in the 2023 and 2024 budgetary provision by the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, bemoaned the poor state of infrastructure in tertiary institutions, especially public universities across Nigeria.

EAI Executive Director, Higher Education Monitoring, Dr. Faseluake Oladikpe, who spoke to newsmen in Abuja, also accused government functionaries of a deliberate plot to sabotage public university education and promote private ones, which they owned or have vested interest in.

Oladikpe, noted that lack of funding of public universities by successive governments portends grave danger to nation development.

He added that the refusal of the government to release the university revitalization fund is gradually killing public universities, adding that infrastructure that could aid teaching and learning has become an eyesore in almost all the universities in Nigeria.

Oladikpe revealed that the organization, in July assessed public universities and in all the schools visited, deteriorating infrastructure

and absence of necessary equipment were common problems.

According to him, if public university education is allowed to collapse by way of government lukewarm attitude to funding, the country will suffer dire consequences as there would be increased crime rate precipitated by joblessness and lack of skill to engage in productive ventures by the young population.

Oladikpe, a trained educational psychologist insisted on the release of the revitalization fund and called on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to quickly save the university system by directing the AG's office to release the N300 billion captured in the budget to universities.



According to him, the Tinubu-led Administration's Student Loan Scheme will amount to nothing, should the infrastructure decay in the nation's citadel of learning remain unattended.

The EAI executive insisted on the implementation of the agreement the Federal Government entered with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) on Needs Assessment programme.

According to him, ASUU is deeply angered by the failure of the Federal

Government to honour the 2009 Needs Assessment agreement aimed at providing N220 billion annually as an intervention fund for the revitalization of public universities in Nigeria.

He warned the president against abandoning the needs assessment scheme designed to provide funds for the reinvigoration of public universities, particularly rehabilitation of decaying infrastructure as well as the provision of state-of-the-art teaching and learning equipment to the schools.

He appealed to the president to cause the immediate release of funds for the continuation of critical projects in the institutions being executed under the needs assessment project.

According to him, the university community anxiously awaits the commencement of the projects.

Oladikpe advised the president whom he acknowledged has made significant statements towards revamping the education sector to release funds for the projects to ensure stable and quality academic environment.

It would be recalled that the Federal Government in 2009 reached an agreement with ASUU for the provision of N220 billion annually as intervention funds for the revitalization of universities.

A review of the agreement was done in 2014. However, it is yet to be implemented resulting in the distortion of academic calendar in the ivory tower.

Source: <https://www.peoplesdailyng.com/literacy-rate-ngo-harps-on-increased-funding-of-education/>



Innovate Foundation boosts girls' education in Sunyani Municipal with donations to schools



Isaac Donkor
Distinguished

Innovate Foundation, a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Sunyani, Bono Region, has donated vital educational materials to two public schools in the Sunyani Municipal.

The beneficiary schools include St. Charles Lwanga R/C Basic School at Watchman and St. Mary's R/C Basic School at Benu Nkwanta.

Among the items donated were toiletries, sanitary pads, school uniforms, books, and various stationery.

The donation aims to promote girls' education and contribute to the overall development of education in the region.

Source: <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1367845/innovate-foundation-boosts-girls-education-in.html>

On December 19, 2024, short presentation ceremonies were held at the two schools, during which students were educated on the importance of maintaining personal hygiene and the value of education as a path to success.

This donation follows a similar gesture from Innovate Foundation last year, when they provided support to schools in Wawasua, Krosua, and Gyato.

Mr. Evans Awuni, the Executive Director of Innovate Foundation, emphasized the organization's focus on environmental sustainability, noting that women play a critical role in combating climate change.

He stressed the importance of empowering girls and training them from a young age to become active agents of change.

"We are a climate change organization where we empower

young people to be at the fore front of the climate adaptation, climate mitigation and climate advocacy," Mr. Awuni said.

"We know that females play a key role in terms of mitigating climate adversaries and therefore we seem it right to reach out to these future women are key stakeholders to understand what climate change is about," he added.

Me Awuni hoped to secure additional resources in the coming years to extend their support to more young girls in need.

David's Adu Kyeremeh, a student at St. Charles Lwanga R/C Basic School, expressed her gratitude to Innovate Foundation for their support.

She encouraged other organizations to assist young girls, particularly those in underserved communities, to ensure they have the necessary resources to succeed in their education.

Arunachal Pradesh Declares 2024-25 as 'Year of Youth,' Focuses on Empowerment and Education Overhaul

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu announced that the State Government has designated 2024-25 as the "Year of Youth," prioritizing youth empowerment and education reform to drive development. This initiative aims to promote entrepreneurship, reduce reliance on government jobs, and equip youth with essential skills through the Arunachal Pradesh Entrepreneurship Development Programme (APEDP). Partnering with IIM Calcutta Innovation Park and other premier institutions, the program provides mentorship, support, and special grants for youth-led startups.

In the education sector, the government is implementing transformative changes over the next three years to enhance infrastructure, ensure quality education, and address teacher shortages. More

than 600 non-functional or low-enrollment schools have been closed or merged, enabling better resource utilization. Focus is shifting to developing well-equipped inter-

village schools with hostels, modern teaching methods, and adequate staff.

To address teacher shortages, the State is recruiting trained graduate teachers (TGTs) and postgraduate teachers (PGTs), particularly in subjects like mathematics and science. Collaborative brainstorming sessions, led by Education Minister P.D. Sona, are driving practical reforms.

Chief Minister Khandu emphasized creating job creators among the youth and improving learning experiences over expanding the number of schools. Public support, he said, is vital for the success of these reforms, which aim to build a self-reliant, prosperous Arunachal Pradesh.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/arunachal-pradesh/will-focus-on-youth-empowerment-overhauling-education-in-2025-arunachal-pradesh-cm-pema-khandu/article69042902.ece>



Social Care Reform: Experts Call for Immediate Action Amid Commission's Lengthy Timeline

The UK government has announced the creation of a National Care Service, with an independent commission led by Baroness Louise Casey set to start in spring 2025. Split into two phases, the first phase will deliver medium-term reform recommendations by mid-2026, while longer-term proposals are expected by 2028. However, social care leaders and stakeholders have expressed frustration over the extended timeline, warning of severe consequences for the sector if immediate action isn't taken.

Professor Martin Green of Care England highlighted the risk of the commission's findings being delayed or overshadowed by political changes, calling for urgent measures to address the current crisis. He

warned that waiting until 2028 could result in irreparable harm to those in care today. Similarly, Melanie Williams of ADASS and Mike Padgham of the ICG criticized the delays, emphasizing the sector's critical state after decades of neglect and the looming uncertainty surrounding implementation beyond the next general election.

Caroline Abrahams of Age UK raised concerns over the delayed consideration of funding for an ageing population, noting that prolonged timelines risk derailing progress due to unforeseen economic or political challenges. Kirsty McHugh of Carers Trust welcomed the announcement's focus on a broad reform but urged that carer voices be central to any future plans.

Layla Moran MP, Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee, echoed the urgency for reform, cautioning against further delays that exacerbate hardships for individuals and families while increasing costs for the NHS and local authorities. She pointed to the enduring inaction since the Dilnot Commission's recommendations 14 years ago.

Stakeholders uniformly agree that while the commission's establishment is a positive first step, immediate interventions are needed to alleviate the sector's overwhelming pressures. Bold, cross-party collaboration and swift action are essential to ensure meaningful reform before the situation worsens further. Without urgency, the sector risks continuing to crumble under the weight of delays.

Source: <https://www.thenational.scot/news/national/24830152.urgent-action-needed-save-crumbling-social-care-sector-charities-warn/>



Juntas in Sahel region make life more difficult for human rights NGOs

NGO's critical reports on human rights are inconvenient for the junta leaders, making them a thorn in the side of West Africa's military regimes.

Niger's military junta says that recent reports published by global human rights organisations like Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International seek to discredit the country.

Niger's armed forces claim that such reports are one-sided and that they do not reflect efforts to reconcile security and fundamental rights.

Numerous NGOs continue to regularly denounce human rights violations in Niger, particularly in the area of political repression and the handling of terrorist threats in the Sahel region. But how much truth is there to that criticism?

Some media recently reported that the work of HRW and Amnesty had been banned in Niger on account of displeasing the military rulers of the country, who claim their biggest focus is to protect human rights through their ongoing fight against terrorist groups.

However, both non-governmental organisations (NGOs) confirmed with DW that no official ban had yet been imposed on them.

It is important to highlight that HRW and Amnesty do not have their own offices in Niger but work together with local informants instead. They also stated that they plan to continue to do so in future.

Restrictive attitudes

However, since the coup d'état in Niger in July 2023, when General Abdourahamane Tiani seized power, the military government has already suspended around 200 local and international organisations for allegedly violating rules.

The Nigerien branch of the NGO Transparency International, which fights corruption worldwide, says it is not surprised by these restrictive attitudes.

"Those in power do not want to be informed about what is going on in their countries. They prefer to remain

silent," Transparency International Secretary Wada Maman told DW.

"It is not true that human rights are protected and that the international laws signed by Niger are accepted."

However, the pro-government group Debout Niger sees things differently, stating that the junta's criticism of NGOs is justified.

The leader of the organisation, Ismael Mohamed, told DW: "These groups are discrediting Niger," adding emphatically that "all organisations and countries in the world should know that anyone who tries to interfere in Niger's affairs will be thrown out of the country."

Mali's Assimi Goita, Niger's General Abdourahamane Tiani and Burkina Faso's Captain Ibrahim Traore at the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) in Niamey, Niger. (Reuters)

This is why NGOs still working on the ground in Niger have become extremely cautious.

Abdoul Aziz from the youth education NGO Mojedec thinks that the government and NGOs should talk to each other to find common ground and avoid disputes

"No things that defame our country (should) be written. Both sides should be listened to. We urge the government of Niger to work with the NGOs," Abdoul said.

One of the reasons why HRW and Amnesty are currently in the spotlight is the fact that they have been denouncing the arrest of Nigerien activist Moussa Tiangari at the beginning of December, which they have decried as being arbitrary

Tiangari, who is the secretary-general of the organisation Alternatives Espaces Citoyens (AEC), known for its critical stance towards the military authorities, was arrested in the capital Niamey by armed men who reportedly were posing as police officers.

"They forced their way into our house," HRW quoted Tiangari's wife as saying. To protect her safety, her name was not given.

"They ordered him to follow them quietly because they didn't want anyone to know what was going on," the wife added, according to HRW.

Drissa Traore, the secretary-general of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), stressed that people like Tiangari do "not belong in prison, nor do several other Nigeriens, who were unjustly arrested by the government, including former president Mohamed Bazoum and his wife."

A supporter of the Alliance of Sahel States (ASS) holds a placard reading 'down with ECOWAS, long live ASS' during a rally in Bamako on February 1, 2024, to celebrate Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger leaving the regional bloc. (Photo: Ousmane Makaveli/ AFP)

Critical voices silenced

In neighbouring Mali, there are also mounting accusations of critical voices being silenced through such arbitrary arrests.

A close confidant of the regime-critical imam Mahmoud Dicko, named Youssouf Daba Diawara, was also recently imprisoned on charges of "resisting legitimate authority" after taking part in an unauthorized opposition demonstration. He was then released at the beginning of October.

Others, however, aren't as fortunate.

Opposition politician Oumar Mariko was forced to leave the country, telling DW that "forcing someone into political exile because of their freedom of expression is simply a criminal act".

"Exile is hard, but there is no sacrifice too great for the fatherland," he said.

But silencing free speech is not contained to each Sahel nation currently under military rule.

Most recently, Malian opposition politician Issa Kaou Djim was arrested in November after the Supreme Council for Communication in neighbouring Burkina Faso accused him of insulting the military junta there.

Burkina Faso appears to deal with critical individuals in one of two ways. If they aren't sent to prison, they could be sent to the front to fight against terrorists. Former minister Ablasse Ouedraogo is one of many who were forcibly recruited into the military by the junta – even though he is already over 70 years old.

Abductions in Guinea

There are also worrying trends

of similar proportions in nearby military-led Guinea.

Human rights activists Mamadou Billo Bah and Oumar Sylla were abducted from their home by hooded men earlier this year in July 2024. They have not been heard from since.

Guinean authorities have assured the public that they had nothing to do with the case, but questions remain.

Meanwhile, the list of violently suppressed critical voices in the region also includes Yaya Dillo in Chad, who was killed during an army operation in March. The leader of the Socialist Party without Borders (PSSF) was seen as the most important opponent of the Chadian junta.

Though his death is officially not regarded as a targeted assassination, the fact that he was killed on the premises of his party makes his family describe his death as "murder".

Dany Ayida, the head of the US National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in the DR Congo, says that these abductions, arbitrary arrests and detentions across the Sahel confirm the authoritarian nature of the military regimes.

These instances "call into question the promises of these rulers to bring more freedom, more dignity to public administration," Ayida told DW.

"The rulers of these countries value their image, and allow no dissent."

However, this is precisely why the work of international NGOs like HRW and Amnesty is needed throughout the region.

With growing repression, they remain the only organisations that can continue to raise objections when freedoms are restricted and human rights are violated.

Source: <https://eastleighvoice.co.ke/headlines/99077/juntas-in-sahel-region-make-life-more-difficult-for-human-rights-ngos>



Activism Amid Adversity: Guayaquil's Fight for Human Rights

In Guayaquil and the coastal provinces of Ecuador, collectives, social movements, and Indigenous communities have long fought for dignity and human rights. Despite their tireless activism, the region is often viewed internationally as a hub of escalating violence, fueled by conflicts between organized criminal groups. In response to rising violence, President Daniel Noboa's administration has declared states of emergency, suspending rights like peaceful assembly and deploying military forces to prisons and public spaces. These measures have prompted allegations of human rights violations, including arbitrary detentions, denial of due process, and attacks on defenders of human rights.

Amidst this hostile climate, Guayaquil's communities have doubled down on grassroots organizing and network-building, continuing their vital advocacy work despite stigmatization by authorities. This publication acknowledges their enduring struggle to protect human rights, emphasizing the need for the government to stop vilifying these movements and instead ensure their protection. It highlights the dignity and resilience of these collectives, urging recognition and support for their efforts in safeguarding the rights of individuals and nature along Ecuador's coast.

Source: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/colectivos-y-movimientos-al-frente-de-la-defensa-de-derechos-humanos-en-guayaquil-y-la-costa-de-ecuador/>



Human Rights Defenders Under Siege: A Call for Global Action in 2025

In 2024, human rights faced relentless challenges as governments worldwide promoted narratives undermining justice and equality. Millions experienced inequality, conflict, and even genocide, while courageous defenders risked their lives to expose abuses and fight for justice. Activists like Zholia Parsi, exiled for protesting gender persecution in Afghanistan, and Leonela Moncayo, fighting toxic gas flaring in Ecuador despite threats, symbolize the resilience of defenders under attack.

The 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders was a significant milestone, urging states to create robust protections. Yet, 25 years later,

attacks on defenders have intensified. The global HRD Memorial database documents thousands of lives lost since the Declaration's adoption. Socioeconomic inequality, discrimination, climate crises, authoritarianism, and technological challenges further compound these struggles.

At the 2018 World Human Rights Defenders Summit, activists highlighted systemic oppression and barriers they face. In 2024, a follow-up initiative, the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders+25, outlined updated recommendations, including protection measures considering collective and intersectional struggles, addressing technology-

facilitated violations, and recognizing the roles of non-state actors like corporations.

Guadalupe Marengo of Amnesty International stresses the urgency of protecting human rights defenders to ensure a safer, more just future. Despite setbacks, defenders and civil society organizations remain steadfast. As 2025 begins, there is a renewed call for states to honor their commitments, acknowledge the vital role of defenders, and provide the safety and resources necessary for their essential work.

Source: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/01/why-protecting-human-rights-defenders-must-be-a-priority-for-us-all/>



Jainoor vendors rebuild livelihood with NGO support after September clashes

Among the big businessmen who sustained heavy losses are Md. Irfan and Santosh Vantre

Adilabad: Jainoor, the mandal headquarters in Kumram Bheem Asifabad district, ravaged by violence in September, has risen like a phoenix. Yes, the resilient residents, some of whom had lost almost everything in the arson, have rebuilt their shops and other places of work literally from ashes.

Fruit and vegetable vendors get NGO aid

The process of rebuilding happened despite no governmental help, at least so far. Private help rescued victims of violence and aided in the process of rebuilding. For example, the Rahbar Foundation, a non-profit charitable organisation, helped poor fruit and vegetable vendors in

restarting their meagre commercial activity.

The organisation distributed over 50 push carts among Muslim and Hindu fruit and vegetable vendors. The carts were also loaded with fruits and vegetables worth Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 each so that the donees don't have to start from zero.

"The help from the Rahbar Foundation means a lot. Instead of using a pushcart taken on rent we now own this and save more," said a happy Sadanand Dadekar, a roadside vegetable vendor.

Dadekar is the neighbour of Bablu, a Muslim fruit vendor who too received a fruit-laden push cart from the charitable organisation. He too was

saved from taking a cart on a long term rent.

The residents of Jainoor were appreciative of the aid given by the Rahbar Foundation. "We are very happy that the organisation has not made any distinction between Muslims, Hindus or tribals when it came to charity though the fissures between these communities were quite visible post the September violence," pointed out Raju Sinde, a professional photographer.

Businesses reduced to ashes in conflict

Among the big businessmen who sustained heavy losses are Md. Irfan and Santosh Vantre. Both have almost similar businesses selling

hardware and electrical goods besides paints and machines.

"Everything was reduced to ashes," said Vantre as he recalled the days immediately after the violence. The burnt material that came out when I cleaned my shop weighed a whopping 11 tonnes," he added to explain the quantum of loss he suffered in the violence.

The problem of marriage

While the residents/victims of violence seem to have come to grips with the financial losses, at least temporarily, they are now faced with issues at a social level. One such problem that has cropped its head is getting the youth married.

Not wanting to be identified, a Muslim resident, a tailor by profession, said he was scared at the prospect of facing difficulty in finding a proper match for his son. The handsomely earning son is employed in an online marketing multinational based in Hyderabad.

"We approached a family in Hyderabad seeking to marry our son to their daughter. They flatly refused the proposal when I told them I am from Jainoor," the angrily amused Jainoor resident reminisced. "They were not satisfied even when I assured them that my son would work and live in Hyderabad. 'Won't he come to visit you?' a family asked before rejecting our proposal," he said.

Meanwhile, the final word on the lasting peace descending upon Jainoor will come after Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy meets the tribals and addresses their problems. He had assured the Adivasis an audience after the Diwali festival and that meeting is long overdue now.

Source: <https://newsmeter.in/top-stories/jainoor-vendors-rebuild-livelihood-with-ngo-support-after-september-clashes-741402>

Statement by Deepmala Mahla, CARE's Global Humanitarian Director on the situation in Syria:

"We watch with joy the scenes of Syrian people rejoicing in happiness across the world in reaction to the news of the end of an era marked by endemic suffering, violence and mass displacement. Today, we join the Syrian people in their unwavering hope and cautious optimism for a better future.

However, the humanitarian needs inside Syria remain enormous. The escalation over the past two weeks has triggered new displacements with an estimated one million people fleeing the violence in various parts of Syria, bringing the number of displaced people higher than 8 million. Displaced people were already facing dire conditions with many of their basic needs unmet.

CARE stands by the people of Syria and is ready to support them rebuild their country. CARE urges international donors to mobilize flexible emergency funding to scale up the humanitarian response to address the urgent needs of the Syrian people and multi-year

funding for early recovery and reconstruction efforts that are now needed more than ever to provide jobs and services to Syrians looking to create a better future for themselves and their families. As Syria enters this transitional period, it is essential to support local civil society and women-led organizations, who are best placed to lead efforts to rebuild their country in line with the aspirations of their people."

Source: <https://www.care-international.org/news/deepmala-mahla-cares-global-humanitarian-director-situation-syria>



Social safety nets to protect vulnerable segments of society

PESHAWAR, JAN 05 (DNA) – In recent years, Pakistan has been grappling with mounting challenges on economic fronts resulting into an increase in poverty and unemployment in the country. The country's most vulnerable segments including laborers, farmers, elderly, women, children, and people with disabilities have borne the brunt of socioeconomic imbalances and societal vulnerabilities due to huge debt burdens.

To mitigate these great hardships, the government and civil society organizations have increasingly turned to social safety nets for socioeconomic emancipation of the downtrodden. These social safety nets are designed to provide a buffer against economic shocks, promote social inclusion, and ensure a more equitable distribution of financial resources in Pakistan.

Like other socioeconomic sectors, social safety nets in Pakistan have evolved significantly over the last few decades. Initially, these were limited to emergency aid and small-scale welfare programs. However, in recent years, the government has expanded its social protection landscape, focusing on multi-dimensional poverty alleviation and resilience building for vulnerable groups.

One of the most notable programs is the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), launched in 2008 has grown into the country's flagship cash transfer initiative of the modern era. "The basic aim of BISP is to provide direct financial support to the poorest households, particularly female-headed families under a transparent mechanism. BISP has made significant strides



in reducing poverty by offering quarterly stipends which provided the much needed relief to underprivileged households," said Ms Javaria, BISP KP spokeswoman while talking to media.

She said the Federal Government has started major initiatives for socioeconomic empowerment of poor households and has recently signed an agreement with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Karandaaz Pakistan to further simplify and enhance the efficiency besides transparency of its funds transfer mechanism.

Under the agreement, she said Karandaaz Pakistan will facilitate easy and transparent payment of funds to about 9.3 million beneficiaries in targeted districts of the country through the RAAST payment system.

She said Karandaaz would also support a nationwide digital and financial literacy training program, with its trial phase would formally launch on June 30, 2025.

She said that BISP's life cycle approach was focusing on initiatives such as Benazir Kafalat, Taleemi

Wazaif, and Nashonuma programs, which play crucial roles in social security and preventing stunting in children and lactating mothers. She said BISP Hunarmand program was being mulled to provide skill development opportunities to deserving women and their families, adding this program seeks to enhance the economic opportunities to eligible families while creating space for new beneficiaries.

He said that efforts were underway to extend BISP support to 10 million people by next year. "BISP is a great blessing for millions of poor families like me," said beneficiary Jasehat Bibi, a housewife of Pabbi Nowshera.

She suggested disbursement of cash through bank accounts to save time for beneficiaries.

Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Minister for Social Welfare said KP government plans to include life insurance scheme in Sehat Card Program and is all set to start eight social safety and empowerment programs including life insurance for all besides setting up of Provincial Islamic Takaful Insurance Company.

He said the KP government was set to introduce universal health coverage for its entire population and to provide life insurance

compensation of Rs500,000 to Rs1,000,000 for the head of a family.

Adaptive Social Protection (APS) project has been approved to transform the social protection system in the province, he said, adding APS would be implemented with the technical assistance of GIZ, aims to strengthen the social protection system with a focus on improving linkages among relevant sectors as well as institutionalizing the use of social protection in disaster management.

He said under the project, an Integrated Social Protection Information System (Data Centre) would be established; thereby ensuring the all-time availability of complete and accurate information about the initiatives program and

activities carried out in the field of social welfare sectors.

Similarly, a record Rs 30.3 billion has been disbursed under the Sehat Card programme from March 2024 to December 24, 2024 in KP. "Despite the evident

success of social safety net programs at national and provincial level, there are significant challenges to their full effectiveness," said Professor Dr Muhammad Naeem Khattak, former chairman, department of Economic, Peshawar University.

For Pakistan's social safety nets to be more effective in the long term,

the experts emphasized the need for sustainable financing models and better targeting of vulnerable populations. The KP government must also invest in education and infrastructure that facilitates access to services, particularly in rural areas. Digital inclusion, for instance, could ensure that financial aid reaches those in remote locations without the need for cumbersome paperwork or long travel times.

However, for these programs to reach their full potential, it will require an integrated approach that addresses both immediate needs and structural drivers of poverty. With sustained commitment, improved governance, and a focus on long-term empowerment, Pakistan can create a more secure and equitable society for all. —DNA

Source: <https://islamabadpost.com.pk/social-safety-nets-to-protect-vulnerable-segments-of-society/>

European Union Representative Joins WHH Closing Event Celebrating CSO BRIDGE Achievements

Welthungerhilfe (WHH) organized a closing event where youth, stakeholders, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Farmers Development Organization (FDO), Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP), Lodhran Pilot Project (LPP), Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), and other partners participated. The event was held under the Building Resilience through Improved Delivery Governance and Youth Empowerment Programme (CSO BRIDGE). The event celebrated achievements like strengthened organizational capacities, improved project management, and effective advocacy for marginalized groups. It ended with a commitment to



sustaining progress and building future partnerships for community development. During the event, Mr. Williams, a representative of the European Union, visited the FDO stall and also engaged in

conversations with government officials and our Civil Society Organization.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/fdopk/posts/?feedView=all>



Building Bangkok's Green Tomorrow

Local leaders and global partners join forces to shape the city's climate action future

As urban centers worldwide confront escalating climate threats, Bangkok exemplifies the dual challenge and opportunity of tackling climate change. With vulnerabilities like flooding, rising temperatures, and air pollution, the city strives to transition into a model of urban sustainability. The Multi-stakeholder Coordination Platform to Strengthen Climate Action in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, organized by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) with support from the Climate Finance Network (CFN) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), marked a bold step in this direction.

The event, supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and attended by around 130 participants, brought together government, private sector, academic, and youth representatives to align efforts on Bangkok's climate and sustainability priorities. This collaborative initiative aimed to map current climate-related activities, identify gaps, and foster partnerships for transformative urban solutions addressing critical environmental challenges.

Bangkok at a Crossroads

Bangkok faces significant climate risks, from urban flooding and air pollution to rising sea levels,

while also contributing heavily to greenhouse gas emissions. This makes it both a victim and a contributor to global climate change. During the event, Associate Professor Dr. Tavida Kamolvej, Deputy Governor of Bangkok, stressed the importance of partnerships to achieve the city's climate goals. "Creating pathways for collaborative action among various stakeholders in our city is fundamental," she said, emphasizing the role of the BMA in enabling effective collaboration across networks.

UNDP Resident Representative to Thailand, Niamh Collier-Smith, echoed the need for broad collaboration, highlighting Bangkok's potential to inspire sustainable urban development globally. "We're working to engage as many partners as possible from the private and public sectors to create a city that addresses climate challenges while serving as a model for a livable, healthy future," she stated.

Reimagining Urban Sustainability

The event revolved around seven key priorities of the Bangkok Masterplan on Climate Change: waste management, air quality, green spaces, energy, water, transportation, and climate adaptation. Moving beyond traditional presentations, the program featured interactive sessions designed to foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration among participants.

Attendees used methodologies like the World Café, Mentimeter live

Source: <https://www.undp.org/asia-pacific/news/building-bangkoks-green-tomorrow>

mapping, and data visualization to explore shared goals and potential collaborations. A standout activity was the interactive stakeholder mapping platform presented by UNDP, which provided insights into existing initiatives and identified synergies among public, private, and development partners. This exercise helped participants align their efforts, fostering a collective approach to addressing Bangkok's environmental challenges.

Partnerships for a Greener Future

The collaboration between BMA and UNDP, supported by CFN and other development partners, reflects a long-term commitment to advancing climate action in Bangkok. The partnership aims to strengthen coordination, mobilize external support, and align private sector investments with BMA's sustainability goals.

UNDP's Collier-Smith noted that partnerships like these are essential for transforming bold climate aspirations into tangible progress. Similarly, Ed MacDonagh from the British Embassy Bangkok emphasized the importance of fostering dialogue and partnerships to support sustainable urban development.

Efforts to map stakeholders and interventions were highlighted as critical to aligning resources effectively. This includes engaging the private sector to invest in public initiatives, ensuring financial and technical

resources are directed toward impactful sustainability projects.

Looking Ahead: The Bangkok X Project

The event also served as a precursor to the Bangkok X Project, set to launch in early 2025. This initiative will focus on 15 pilot districts, bringing together public and private stakeholders to implement innovative sustainability projects. The project aims to showcase creative approaches to urban resilience and establish Bangkok as a leader in sustainable urban development.

Conclusion

Bangkok's journey toward a greener future is gaining traction. By convening diverse stakeholders and fostering collaboration, the city is building a foundation for sustainable urban innovation and resilience. Events like this reflect Bangkok's commitment to becoming a global beacon of climate action and sustainable development, demonstrating how cities can address environmental challenges while inspiring transformative change.



Call for CSOs: Strengthening Advocacy and Communication on AI Ethics, Data and Digital Rights

Deadline: 2-Feb-25

The Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF) is offering a new training opportunity to increase public awareness and understanding of some of the human rights risks introduced by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and in relation to Data and Digital Rights (DDR).

This course is designed to improve the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Mexico and Colombia to effectively launch and implement communication and advocacy strategies focused on issues related to AI and digital rights.

This initiative builds on TRF's mission to support free, fair and informed societies and its expertise in using the power of journalism and the law to advance media freedom, promote inclusive economies and protect human rights.

The training will deepen participants' knowledge on the principles of AI ethics, data privacy, and other digital rights issues. The course will cover a variety of topics, including the ethical implications of AI, data collection and protection, bias (and impartiality) in AI systems, regulatory gaps, AI and misinformation, and more. The program will include a mix of interactive sessions, expert guests, and practical exercises to achieve a dynamic and relevant training experience. TRF will deliver the hybrid training in Spanish, combining 1 day of online sessions, offline work, and 4 days of in-person sessions in Bogotá, Colombia.

Over 25,000 NGOs, companies, and individuals have unlocked exclusive grants, resources, and opportunities with our Premium Membership – and now, it's your turn! Take advantage of our biggest discount yet and start achieving your goals today. Don't miss this chance to join the thriving community that's already benefiting from Premium. Upgrade now at 78% off!

Course Objectives

- To equip CSOs with the skills and tools to communicate clearly, accurately and confidently on data and AI ethics issues, boosting their ability to engage effectively with media and regulators to drive change.
- Enhance CSO advocacy efforts by equipping participants with strategy development and implementation skills.
- Strengthening the resilience of CSOs by facilitating access to free legal advice.
- Course Results
- After the training, participants will be able to:
- Design and implement effective communication and advocacy strategies;
- Improve your communication and advocacy skills;

- Increase your organizational resilience;
- Gain support to produce high-impact advocacy tools;
- Networking with journalists from Mexico and Colombia who report on these issues;
- Increase knowledge on existing AI regulation in Latin America, international AI frameworks and standards, and advocacy approaches towards the development of human rights-based AI regulations;
- Gain access to free legal assistance to conduct research with the aim of establishing public policy recommendations or identifying good practices;
- Leverage the multi-stakeholder approach facilitated by the programme to promote collaboration, information sharing and coordination.

Logistics

- **Online Training:** Week of March 31
- **Course structure:** The course will begin with a half-day (4 hours) online training, where you will have the opportunity to meet the trainers and other course participants. This will be followed by four full days of in-person training in Bogotá, Colombia. During the in-person training, you will have the opportunity to meet and network with journalists

working in this field, who will receive journalism training at the same time.

- **Participation costs:** Participation in this program is free of charge. If you live outside of Bogotá, travel expenses (e.g. flight) and accommodation will be covered by TRF. All participants will receive a modest stipend during the in-person training.

Who can apply?

- Applicants must work full-time for a civil society organization operating in Mexico or Colombia.
- Your role in the

organization should include some communication skills.

- Applicants must have a minimum of two years' professional experience and must explain in their application why they will benefit from participating in this course, and how they plan to use the learning in their professional work.
- Once selected, applicants will be asked to submit a letter from their organisation supporting their participation in the programme. TRF will only request such a letter once candidates have been selected for the course.
- Applicants must have access to a minimum internet speed of 8MB/second. Applicants will also need access to a computer to participate in

online training; participation from a mobile or smartphone will not be possible.

- Preference will be given to applicants from organisations working on digital rights issues and who can explain how the training will enable their organisation to strengthen its work on human rights risks in relation to AI and digital rights.
- Organisations that are not successful in securing a place on the training may benefit from free legal assistance from the Thomson Reuters Foundation's TrustLaw service. Applicants will be contacted by the TrustLaw team regarding this possible support.

Source: <https://www2.fundsforngos.org/community-development/call-for-csos-strengthening-advocacy-and-communication-on-ai-ethics-data-and-digital-rights/>



Call for Proposals: Geneva AI Initiative (Switzerland)

Deadline: 31-Jan-2025

The Geneva AI Initiative is open to support international organizations and NGOs based in Geneva in developing projects that leverage the full potential of AI to tackle global challenges.

The Geneva AI Initiative by the EPFL AI Center aims to strengthen the AI capabilities of international organizations and NGOs based in Geneva. It seeks to provide these organizations with access to cutting-edge AI expertise and resources from EPFL and its partner institutions, in order to enhance their operational effectiveness and mission impact.

This [call for proposals](#) invites innovative AI projects that address the challenges faced by these organizations in their operations and missions. Projects can benefit from cutting-edge AI expertise from EPFL and its partner institutions to create innovative, AI-driven solutions that deliver real, measurable impact.

Scope

- Proposals from all sectors relevant to international cooperation and governance are welcome, but each project should clearly demonstrate how AI technology will be applied to address specific challenges faced by the applying organization.
- Given the urgency of the challenges and the rapid pace of AI developments, particular interest is placed on projects that can demonstrate a short

time to impact. Proposals should clearly define their AI needs and outline an expedited path from [development](#) to implementation, emphasizing both responsible AI practices and rapid, tangible results.

Thematic Areas

- The call will support projects in any thematic areas that the organization specializes in, including (but not limited to):
 - Humanitarian aid and crisis response
 - [Human rights](#) and social justice
 - Environmental protection and climate change
 - Public health and well-being
 - [Economic](#) and social development
 - [Peace](#) and security
 - Education and capacity building

Funding Information

- Funding is available for short-term projects with a maximum budget of 300,000 CHF each.
- The duration of funded projects should not exceed 12 months.

Eligible Costs

- Funding will be provided for the following direct costs related to the project:

- Personnel:** Salaries for project-specific staff, including researchers, data scientists, and technical support.
- Equipment:** Project-specific equipment costs linked to the development and implementation of AI solutions. This may include specialized hardware or software necessary for the project.
- Research expenses:** Costs directly associated with conducting the research, such as data acquisition, cloud computing resources, or specialized AI tools.
- Travel and meetings:** Essential travel costs for project-related meetings, workshops, or field work.
- Dissemination:** Costs related to sharing project results, such as publications or presentations at relevant conferences.
- Partners (AI experts):** Cost related to AI expertise, such as salaries of the partner's employees, research expenses, travel and meetings, and dissemination.
- The grant cannot be used to cover existing administrative services or the salary of the applicant(s) of the applying organization(s) and partners.
- Subcontracting expenses are not eligible under this

grant. All work should be carried out by the applying organization(s) in collaboration with EPFL or other partners facilitated by the Geneva AI Initiative.

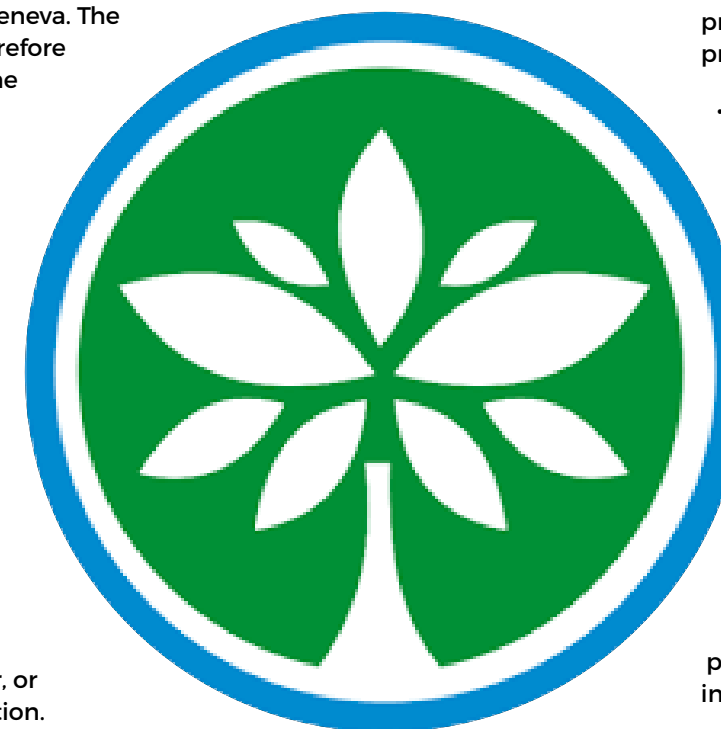
- All expenses must be directly related to the proposed AI project and incurred within the 12-month project duration.

Eligibility Criteria

- This call is open exclusively to international organizations (IO) and NGOs based in Geneva. The main applicant is therefore from an NGO or IO. The main applicant bears the main scientific and administrative responsibility for the project.
- The main applicant must be employed by the applying organization for the entire duration of the project. The main applicant should hold a senior position within the organization, such as Head of Unit, Director, or member of the Direction.
- Each proposal submission requires the designation of a main applicant who will be responsible for the scientific and administrative management of the project.
- Consortia of multiple Geneva-based international organizations or NGOs are welcome to apply, but a single organization must be designated as the lead applicant. Co-

applicant(s) are jointly with the main applicant responsible for the project.

- Applicants may submit only one project as the main applicant but can be involved as co-applicants in up to two additional projects.
- The main applicant does not need to have a technical background in AI. However, the proposal must demonstrate access to AI expertise through a letter of



support from a partner (either EPFL or another recognized AI expert). This letter should outline the planned collaboration and available AI expertise. (The role of the partner is to contribute to the project but not to bear responsibility for the project.) The Geneva AI Initiative can facilitate matchmaking between applicants and appropriate

AI expertise from EPFL or its partners as needed.

Application Requirements

- The application file must include the following:
 - A 5-page project proposal including the background and motivation for the project, the research plan, and the implementation strategy and expected results. Please use the template that is provided on the programme webpage for your project proposal.
 - Budget. Please use the budget template that is provided on the call webpage.
 - Letters of support of the partner(s) with AI expertise.
 - CV of all involved applicants and partners (max. 2 pages).
 - List of relevant publications (if any) of all applicants and partners involved in the project, with no restrictions in terms of dates.
- Applicants will be required to fill out an ethical issue form via the online submission platform.
- All required documents must be submitted in English.

Source: <https://www2.fundsforngos.org/community-development/call-for-proposals-geneva-ai-initiative-switzerland/>



Applications open for 2025 Douglas County Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge; entry is free



MAYA HODISON

A local competition offers a platform for Douglas County youth to pitch their business ideas and earn cash prizes.

The 2025 Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge is open to students in sixth through 12th grades who reside in Douglas County, and it's free to enter, according to a county news release.

Participants prepare a written summary of their businesses, give an elevator speech and formal presentation, and construct a trade show display.

This will be the seventh year of the competition. Students have previously pitched businesses with services, such as swimming lessons, pet sitting and lawn tool rentals, and goods such as resale clothing, jewelry and baked goods. In 2024, there were 15 student participants representing nine businesses.

Local entrepreneurs, teachers and other community members serve on a judges panel. Douglas County Commissioner Shannon Reid has previously been a judge for the event.

"The Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge is one of the coolest events Douglas County gets to be part of each year," Reid said in the release. "I love that we can help showcase local youth who are endlessly creative and who have neat ideas to share."

Students compete for \$3,000 in prize money – first place earning \$1,250; second place \$1,000; third place \$500; and a People's Choice Award, \$250. The teacher of the first-place winner also earns \$250.

The registration deadline is 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24. Applications can be found via goventuredash.com.

Participants will make their pitches at the competition scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to noon Friday, Feb. 7, at the Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center, 2920 Haskell Ave. in Lawrence.

Learn more on the county's website, dgcoks.gov.

Source: <https://lawrencekstimes.com/2025/01/02/apps-open-25-dgcocoyec/>

Rahnuma-FPAP Launches Project to Enhance Inclusive SRHR Access Across Pakistan

Rahnuma-Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP) successfully hosted a two-day inception meeting in Lahore for its new project, "Ensuring Inclusive SRHR Delivery for Women, Girls, and Marginalized Communities." The event brought together the Program Implementation team from across Pakistan to strategize and initiate efforts for advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) nationwide.

The project aims to provide increased access to high-quality, person-centered SRHR services through six Family Health Hospitals located in Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Kohat,

Karachi, and Quetta, as well as one Family Health Model Clinic in district Chakwal. The services include comprehensive care addressing sexual health and well-being, contraception, and menstrual regulation (MR).

A key focus of the initiative is empowering adolescents, women, and gender-diverse individuals to understand and claim their SRHR. By building awareness and enhancing education, the project seeks to dismantle barriers that hinder access to essential health services. Additionally, the initiative emphasizes the integration of gender equality and Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) in communities to foster inclusive health practices.

At a broader level, the project aims to create a supportive legislative and policy environment for SRHR. This includes advocating for enhanced regulations and policies that protect and promote menstrual regulation, LSBE, and gender equality at both national and sub-national levels.

Rahnuma-FPAP's initiative underscores its commitment to improving SRHR services and fostering equality, ensuring that no one is left behind. The project is poised to make significant contributions to advancing the health and well-being of women, girls, and marginalized communities across Pakistan.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7282998330110959616/>



Youth as Catalysts for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established by the United Nations in 2015, aim to eradicate poverty, protect the environment, and improve global living standards by 2030. With the world at the halfway point to this ambitious agenda, the role of youth is increasingly recognized as essential for its success.

Harnessing Youth Potential

With 1.8 billion people aged 10-24, young people represent the largest generation in history, offering unprecedented demographic leverage for sustainable development. Their energy, creativity, and ability to mobilize across borders, often through digital platforms, position them as agents of change capable of driving transformation and scaling local solutions to global levels.

Education as a Catalyst

Education is pivotal in equipping youth with the critical thinking, problem-solving, and global

citizenship skills necessary to advance the SDGs. Integrating sustainability into formal curricula and informal skill-development programs can prepare young people to contribute to green industries and the circular economy, ensuring their active participation in building a sustainable future.

Youth-Led Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Youth-led entrepreneurial ventures are emerging as powerful tools to address multiple SDGs simultaneously. Innovations such as apps to reduce food waste or renewable energy systems for rural areas highlight their potential to combine profit with purpose.

Governments and organizations can accelerate this momentum by providing funding, mentorship, and platforms to showcase youth innovations.

Participation in Policy and Governance

Involving youth in decision-making processes ensures that their aspirations are reflected in policies. Platforms like youth parliaments, advisory boards, and UN youth delegations allow young voices to shape governance structures and create inclusive strategies for implementing the SDGs.

Environmental Advocacy and Stewardship

Young activists have taken the lead in climate action, advocating for change and engaging in conservation practices like tree planting and building climate-resilient communities. Their efforts are critical to achieving SDG 13 (Climate Action) and fostering sustainable resource management.

Leveraging Technology for Impact

Digitally savvy youth are using technology to develop solutions for tracking SDG progress, forecasting environmental trends,

and engaging in citizen science. Addressing the digital divide will further amplify the impact of youth-driven technological interventions.

Overcoming Challenges

Despite their potential, youth face barriers such as limited resources, representation, and intergenerational skepticism. Bridging these gaps requires mentoring, intergenerational partnerships, and recognition of youth contributions to inspire widespread engagement.

Empowering youth today is key to achieving the SDGs by 2030. Their energy, innovation, and commitment are invaluable assets in building a more equitable and sustainable future.

Source: <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2025/01/04/driving-transformation-the-crucial-role-of-youth-in-promoting-the-sdgs/>

4H Norway and 4H Gambia Reaffirm Commitment to SDGs Through Sustainable Partnership

4H Norway is currently on a two-week study tour in The Gambia, gathering information and engaging with 4H Youth Clubs in the North Bank and Central River Regions. The delegation, which includes 17 volunteers and two technical officers, organized a two-day seminar on Friday with 4H Gambia staff, volunteers, and board members.

The theme of the seminar was “Innovation for Sustainability,” focusing on the role of 4H Gambia and 4H Norway in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This study tour provided the opportunity for the group to learn about 4H Gambia’s activities and the impact of its projects in local communities.

The seminar took place at the Gambia Songhai Initiative Agricultural Training Centre in Chamen, North Bank Region.

Gibriel Dem, National Board Chairman of 4H Gambia, emphasized the importance of the partnership with 4H Norway, noting that it has significantly contributed to promoting shared learning and South-South cooperation. He described the seminar as crucial, as it helps both visiting volunteers and their Gambian counterparts gain a broader understanding of the SDGs



and adopt common approaches to building stronger partnerships.

Alieu Ceesay, Program Director of 4H Gambia, highlighted the partnership’s positive impact on youth empowerment, climate change initiatives, and entrepreneurship, among other areas. He explained that the study tour is part of a biannual visit organized by the parent organization in Norway, with the ultimate goal of empowering youths to engage in innovative ventures that will improve economic well-being and foster community development. Director Ceesay expressed gratitude to 4H Norway for their invaluable support over the past 30 years and reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the sustainability of the organization through ongoing partnership-building.

Tor Brekke and Solveig Karlsen BJORLO, technical volunteers from 4H Norway, praised the management and board of 4H Gambia for their exceptional performance in resource mobilization, good governance, accountability, and partnership building. The duo shared that 4H Norway has learned a great deal from their Gambian counterparts, particularly in areas such as the implementation of revolving loan schemes, tree nursery management, and small ruminant breeding. Senior officials from 4H Norway assured that the cooperation between the two organizations will continue to grow in the coming years.

As part of their visit, the volunteers spent two days with their host families to experience village life and the local culture within 4H

intervention sites. The group also had the opportunity to tour the Songhai Center and expressed satisfaction with how the center is promoting agroforestry and biogas use in climate-smart agricultural production to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Musa Chaw, Finance and Admin Officer, provided a detailed presentation on the organization’s achievements and challenges. He thanked 4H Norway for their support in mobilizing resources for the construction of office space in Farafenni and noted the organization’s success in strengthening 4H clubs, improving access to agricultural inputs, and advocating for human rights and immunization in collaboration with various institutions and organizations.

Mbye Saine, Centre Manager of the Gambia Songhai Initiative, thanked both 4H Gambia and 4H Norway for their focus on achieving the SDGs. He used the occasion to call on individuals to plant fruit trees and nitrogen-fixing plants to combat the effects of climate change. He also urged 4H management to train youth in quality seed selection techniques and stressed the importance of fostering positive behaviors toward environmental restoration and preservation.

Through this collaboration, 4H Gambia and 4H Norway continue to work together to promote sustainable development, empower youth, and combat climate change.

DeFi Water Bond Challenge to Meet UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs).

Stamford, Connecticut, USA – **WEBWIRE** – Monday, January 6, 2025A real “Blockchain for Good” holiday project has been launched to bring technology, social good, SDGs, climate, and health together for a Hunger & Poverty initiative in Namibia, Africa. A not-for-profit group, OikosNomosWorld, has challenged developers, engineers, financial, and healthcare pioneers to develop a solution to finance a water tap in the desert, for people in Namibia; contributing to UN Sustainable Development Goals to impact no poverty, zero hunger, work and economic growth, and reduced inequalities.

Blockchain in Healthcare Today (BHTY) is the landmark international public access journal that amplifies and disseminates platform approaches in healthcare and distributed ledger technology research and innovations.

Together, OikosNomosWorld and BHTY journal are sharing the challenge to develop a solution for this initiative that includes:

1. How to sustainably finance this project? For example, an interest bearing bond, such as a DeFi Hunger & Poverty Water Bond?
2. Identify the technology to get it done. For example, perhaps a mobile app is best suited for project execution?

3. Submitting written solutions are required, a maximum 2,000 word article report describing a SOLUTION for the detailed purpose, description, and case use located at

<https://blockchainhealthcareday.com/index.php/journal/article/view/375>

The Deadline for Submission is March 15, 2025. The journal submission portal is located at

<https://blockchainhealthcareday.com/index.php/journal/about/submissions>

The best three solutions will be published in BHTY journal at no cost. The ONW board and BHTY editors will select the best three solutions for publication in the April 2025 journal issue.

Questions? Contact Cees Hesp directly at ceeshesp@hotmail.com, or contact the OikosNomos.World team (<https://oikosnomos.world>), at onw.world@hotmail.com

For additional details regarding the new BHTY journal Sponsored Content insertions now available for marketers, organizations, professionals, and researchers looking to showcase thought leadership, expertise, innovative solutions, challenges, advertisements, and related multimedia content, to share with a highly targeted audience,

Source: <https://www.webwire.com/ViewPressRel.asp?aId=331538>

Learning poverty

WE often observe during recruitment tests of various government and private entities that the candidates are unable to attempt very simple questions presented to them. Sometimes it can be ascribed to panic and confusion. However, that is not always true. Many students after 12 to 14 years of education, still lack proficiency in languages and general knowledge.

'Learning poverty' is a term coined by the World Bank to gauge the quality of education being imparted at foundational level in a country. According to a World Bank report, in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), 53 per cent children cannot read and understand a simple story by the end of primary school. This crisis threatens countries' efforts to build human capital and achieve the target set under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In Pakistan, this ratio is 75pc, much higher than the regional average. There are thousands of schools in Punjab alone where a single teacher is posted and has to conduct all the classes. This is alarming. The Punjab government should take effective measures to appoint full complement of primary school teachers in every school.

One effective way of reducing 'learning poverty' can be the education of mothers, especially in rural areas. Education classes for home-staying mothers can be organised at the community level, enabling them to read and write, and subsequently help in the progress of their children.

We need to move quickly to make up for the lost time since better as well as universal education is the main solution to Pakistan's lingering problems.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1883001>

Niš Leads Serbia's Local SDG Action with First Voluntary Local Review

Two months after launching its inaugural Voluntary Local Review (VLR), the City of Niš has emerged as a regional leader in aligning urban development with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the first city in Serbia and the third in Southeast Europe to produce a VLR, Niš provides a model for leveraging local insights to drive sustainable strategies.

Developed in collaboration with UN-Habitat, UN-DESA, UNECE, and UCLG, the VLR tackles key urban challenges such as youth employment and climate resilience. A notable innovation is the inclusion of the Quality-

of-Life Index, which combines objective and subjective data for evidence-based decision-making and urban well-being tracking.

The VLR evaluates Niš's performance through 26 indicators spanning 12 SDGs and proposes actionable recommendations, including a policy to improve local job opportunities for young professionals and vulnerable groups. Although still in the planning stages, these recommendations will be integrated into existing urban policies and programs.

The review has enhanced Niš's SDG monitoring capabilities

by establishing a dedicated unit to collect, analyze, and verify relevant data. This systematic approach to local monitoring marks a first for Serbia, paving the way for better implementation and improved quality of life.

Niš's success has inspired plans to scale SDG localization nationwide, with up to 20 municipalities preparing their own VLRs under a joint initiative supported by UNICEF, UNEP, and UN-Habitat. By fostering collaboration and inclusivity, the VLR process strengthens local governance and ensures no one is left behind in sustainable development.

Source: <https://www.vironewsigeria.com/his-advances-sdg-localisation-in-serbia-with-first-voluntary-local-review/>



The collaborative power of AI and citizen science in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals

Professor Muki Haklay joins IIASA researchers in exploring how the fusion of citizen science and artificial intelligence (AI) can drive progress toward achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Citizen science and artificial intelligence (AI) offer immense potential for tackling urgent sustainability challenges, from health to climate change. Combined, they offer innovative solutions to accelerate progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). IIASA researchers explored the synergies between citizen science and AI, specifically highlighting how the integration of citizen science data and approaches into AI can enhance sustainable development monitoring and achievement while mitigating AI risks.

The SDGs were launched in 2015 to guide global efforts toward sustainability by 2030. However, as this deadline nears, many countries still lack the data needed to track SDG progress. For example, data are missing for nearly half of the 92 environmental indicators, only 15% of targets are on track, and all SDG targets suffer from insufficient data. Other challenges include poor data quality, limited data sharing, infrequent data collection, and lack of local data, hindering targeted interventions.

The perspective piece authored by IIASA researchers and published in *Nature Sustainability*, explores how combining the collaborative strengths of citizen science with AI can enhance both SDG monitoring and achievement.

Citizen science is already contributing to the SDGs by helping to address data gaps through public participation in scientific research. Successful applications have been demonstrated for SDGs 3 (good health and wellbeing), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 14 (life below water), and 15 (life on land). However, despite increasing interest from the UN, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and government agencies, challenges around data quality, lack of awareness and legal frameworks continue to limit the integration of citizen science data into SDG monitoring and reporting, and ultimately for informing policy decisions.

In parallel, recent advancements in AI have sparked interest in its potential to support sustainable development and address data challenges faced by NSOs and international organizations. AI's major contributions to SDG progress include rapid analysis of large datasets, enhanced data accessibility, efficient data collection, task automation, real-time data and insights, and improved data visualization – potentially in a more cost-efficient way. Nonetheless, AI poses challenges and risks, including biases in training data that can produce unreliable results.

The authors propose that citizen science approaches can help mitigate AI risks by providing more localized and disaggregated, thus representative data.

“AI algorithms require large amounts of data, yet many parts of the world, especially the Global South, face data shortages. This lack of data, especially local data, can lead to AI models that don't reflect specific local contexts, resulting in inaccurate findings, biases, and widening disparities between the

Global North and South, as well as within countries,” explains Dilek Fraisl, lead author of the perspective piece and researcher in the Novel Data Ecosystems for Sustainability Research Group of the IIASA Advancing Systems Analysis Program. “Citizen science can help address this gap by providing more local and thus representative data, which can help improve the accuracy of AI results.”

Fraisl further explains that AI models are only as reliable as the data they are trained on, and any biases in this data can cause misleading results. So, while AI has great potential, its benefits will only be fully realized if its biases and limitations are carefully addressed.

The recent adoption of the Global Digital Compact within the UN's Pact for the Future, a framework outlining principles, objectives, and actions for advancing an open, free, secure and human-centered digital future for all, highlights the need for global cooperation in AI governance. This framework emphasizes AI's role in achieving sustainable development while also warning of its risks, such as potential threats to human rights. Incorporating citizen science approaches into AI can be a crucial step towards addressing these risks and ensuring that AI serves the common good.

“The integration of citizen science and AI offers a promising path forward in SDG monitoring and achievement. When used together, AI's analytical power and citizen science's contextual relevance create synergies that can address sustainability challenges more effectively. However, careful attention to inclusivity, representation, and governance is essential to harnessing these tools in a way that genuinely benefits all,” concludes Fraisl.

Source: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/geography/news/2025/jan/collaborative-power-ai-and-citizen-science-advancing-sustainable-development-goals>

Senegal Climbs Up UN's Development Ladder, Leaving LDC Category

(Ecofin Agency) - Senegal has made great progress in economic and human development. It will be the fifth African country to leave the Least Developed Countries (LDC) category, after Botswana, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

In December 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to remove Senegal from the LDC list after a five-year preparatory period, ending in December 2029.

"The UN General Assembly has adopted resolution A/79/L.49, Graduation of Cambodia and Senegal from the least developed country category. The two countries will graduate from the category on 19

December 2029 after being granted, on an exceptional basis, an extended preparatory period of five years (the standard period is of three years) to enable them to effectively prepare for graduation and ensure a smooth transition out of the category," the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs [stated](#).

The UN urged Senegal and Cambodia to create national strategies to manage this transition, with support from UN agencies and partnerships with regional, bilateral,

and multilateral stakeholders. It also described the removal from the LDC category as a landmark achievement, reflecting significant progress toward development goals.

As a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Senegal has made remarkable advancements in economic growth and human development over recent decades. Between 2014 and 2019, the economy grew at an average rate of 6% annually. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and domestic political tensions slowed growth, which fell to 4.1% in 2023 and 5% in 2024.

Despite these challenges, Senegal's economic outlook is promising, driven by the start of hydrocarbon exploitation. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts a growth rate of 10% in 2025.

Senegal's

Human Development Index has also improved significantly, increasing from 0.371 in 1990 to 0.517 in 2022 on a scale from 0 to 1.

The LDC category, created by the UN General Assembly in 1971, is designed to provide special international support to the world's most vulnerable nations. This status allows access to preferential markets, development aid, technical assistance, and technology capacity-building programs.

Countries are added to or removed from the LDC list following reviews by the UN Committee for Development Policy. The committee evaluates socioeconomic factors such as gross national income per capita, which must exceed \$1,306 for removal, human development indicators like child and maternal mortality rates and literacy, and vulnerability to economic and environmental challenges, such as reliance on agriculture and susceptibility to natural disasters.

Since its establishment, eight countries have graduated from the LDC category: Botswana in 1994, Cabo Verde in 2007, the Maldives in 2011, Samoa in 2014, Equatorial Guinea in 2017, Vanuatu in 2020, Bhutan in 2023, and São Tomé and Príncipe in 2024.

Currently, there are 44 countries in the LDC category, with 32 in Africa, 8 in Asia, 3 in the Pacific, and 1 in the Caribbean. Some countries, such as Zimbabwe, Bolivia, and North Korea, have chosen not to be included in the LDC list.

Source: <https://www.ecofinagency.com/public-management/0601-46284-senegal-climbs-up-un-s-development-ladder-leaving-ldc-category>

Youth Employability Network Empowers Women in Zhob with Financial Literacy

The Youth Employability Network (YEN) recently conducted a successful financial literacy session in Zhob, Balochistan, as part of its commitment to empowering women and fostering community development. The session witnessed the participation of 42 inspiring women who gained valuable skills to enhance their financial knowledge and independence.

Through interactive workshops and engaging discussions, participants were equipped with the tools and resources needed to make informed financial decisions. The session covered essential topics such as budgeting, saving, and managing personal finances, empowering women to secure a brighter future for themselves and their families.

This initiative highlights the transformative power of education and skill-building in creating positive change. Financial literacy is a critical step toward enabling women to achieve financial

independence, contribute to their households, and actively participate in local economies.

YEN is dedicated to bridging the gap in opportunities for women, especially in underserved regions like Zhob. By focusing on capacity building and empowerment, YEN aims to address the challenges women face and unlock their potential as change-makers in society.

The success of this session reflects the importance of collaborative efforts to support women's development. YEN encourages government bodies, civil society organizations, and individuals to join hands in expanding such initiatives across Balochistan and beyond. Together, these efforts can pave the way for a more inclusive and prosperous society.

With continued dedication, YEN envisions a future where women in Zhob and similar communities are empowered to thrive and lead with confidence.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>



Nature goes to court

Driving climate justice through legal channels



KANNI WIGNARAJA

Nature is taking the stand as courtrooms worldwide become battlegrounds for Earth's rights. The rise in climate litigation shows how the environment can take centre stage as a plaintiff, demanding justice and accountability, benefiting us all.

On 23 October 2024, [India's Supreme Court declared a pollution-free environment a fundamental right](#), underscoring the government's duty to provide clean air and water. In April 2024,

the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the Swiss State for inadequate climate action, affirming climate change as a human rights issue.

Since 2017, climate change court cases have surged, particularly in the US, but increasingly worldwide. Cases tripled from [884 in 2017](#) to [2,540 in 2023](#), with about 17 percent now occurring in developing countries, including small island developing states. The legal landscape is evolving, with significant rulings in Asia and the Pacific driving change. This is an area where UNDP is providing crucial support.

Early and groundbreaking work

For an example of climate justice pioneering, we can turn to 2010 to India's National Green Tribunal and the Philippines' Writ of Kalikasan (Kalikasan means Nature in Filipino language). This unique legal instrument - whose design was supported by UNDP - enables

safeguard balanced and healthy ecosystems. For example, it has been used to close dumpsites and illegal landfills, prompt the rehabilitation of Manila Bay, and order the listing of non-environmentally friendly plastic products.

Similarly, courts in Pakistan have adopted a "climate justice" perspective, forming a climate change commission. A notable case involved seven-year-old Rabab Ali, who challenged plans to expand coal production in the Thar desert, focusing on intergenerational

Human rights-related to environmental assets and protections: Courts are recognizing the connection between climate change and human rights, boosting protections and accountability. Many courts now interpret constitutional rights to include environmental protections.

Intergenerational equity: Cases by youth emphasize the unequal impact of climate change on future generations and how climate justice is one of the main advocacy issues for youth worldwide.

Corporate accountability: Courts extending climate obligations to businesses.

Innovative legal concepts: New principles like "water justice" and recognizing nature's legal rights are gaining traction, for example trees as living beings.

Source: <https://www.undp.org/blog/nature-goes-court>



citizens to protect environmental rights by filing swift, accessible court petitions addressing ecological damages affecting multiple regions. It allows immediate judicial intervention to

equity in climate actions. Pakistan was also one of the main proponents of the Loss and Damage concept, when it was first tabled.

What are the emerging trends in climate litigation we are seeing now?

Following the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, activists and citizens worldwide are increasingly turning to courts for climate solutions, spurring innovative legal approaches and rethinking what climate justice means. Key trends include:



Nepal: High-risk waste

Present for thirty years in Nepal, notably through emergency responses to support a population regularly affected by violent earthquakes, Médecins du Monde is today working with a community whose work directly threatens health: waste collectors.

The noise is deafening, the smell unbearable. In the early morning, the sun is already burning the Kathmandu Valley, casting the shadows of hundreds of silhouettes crowding the mountains of garbage in the dump. Amidst the impressive ballet of bulldozers and other trucks that have come to dump the capital's garbage, the waste collectors, absorbed in their task, take all the risks to sort as quickly as possible, recovering a few products along the way that they could resell to ensure an income. "Here, everyone is afraid of accidents, but there are many other

dangers, such as exposure to toxic or sharp products," explains Jano Dangol, representative of the Sasaja collectors' association.

"Low caste"

In Nepal, the waste treatment system is complex and this activity is denigrated by the population. It therefore relies on the investment of the most precarious, whether they are from Indian immigration or members of the "lower castes" - also called Dalit or Untouchables. Society ignores, stigmatizes, and even attacks these people located at the bottom of the social ladder.



Source:



"People don't want to be talked to, or touched," says Madan Pandit, a door-to-door collector. Only a small minority are employed by town halls and therefore have some equipment. "All the others are informal workers and extremely precarious, with no security or income," laments Abdul Saboor Khan, general coordinator of Médecins du Monde in Nepal.

While the dangers are numerous - cuts, infections, burns, poisoning, exposure to tetanus and communicable diseases, bone and muscle trauma - access to care is very limited. "Nepal has fairly effective health insurance to cover the basic health needs of the population," explains Abdul Saboor, "but it is financially inaccessible for the vast majority of these informal collectors." A major obstacle, reinforced by a lack of support adapted to their problems, or even a certain reluctance of caregivers to take care of them.

A new model in health

When in 2015 the Nepalese government introduced the concept of UHPC, a new model of local care centers that could accommodate the most vulnerable and relieve congestion in the country's seven hospitals, Médecins du Monde saw it as a real opportunity for inclusiveness in health. But, due to a lack of will or resources, the years went by and nothing was done. In 2019, the association decided to set up the first UHPC in Kathmandu. "The idea was to prove the effectiveness and relevance of this type of structure and to deliver the methodology to the government for dissemination throughout the country," recalls Abdul Saboor. "But we set one condition: the inclusion in these centers of a health offer adapted to the specific needs of waste collectors."

Today, while this center meets the needs of the neighborhood's 15,000 or so residents, it has especially become essential for informal collectors, who are monitored and treated there free of charge. A personalized offer that Aastha

Lamichhane, a nurse at the UHPC, is delighted with: "They know the immediate risks of their work but much less the more indirect consequences, and they are so busy surviving that we see a lot of delays in care, which aggravates their problems. We therefore ensure that we are proactive in their monitoring, for example with the systematic and free vaccination of adults against diphtheria and tetanus." A permanent link is maintained thanks to local waste collector associations, such as Sasaja, with whom Médecins du Monde organizes awareness-raising activities in the field.

the city of Kathmandu has taken over the management of the UHPC health center and, convinced of its relevance, is currently working on its reproduction in 32 districts of the capital. "We continue to support the dissemination of these UHPCs, with direct support to five of them, and we also support other paramedical health centers in Kathmandu and Nepalganj, always with this aim of bringing care closer to waste collectors and all marginalized groups," explains Abdul Saboor Khan.

Source: <https://www.medecinsdumonde.org/actualite/nepal-dechets-a-hauts-risques/>

Rwanda, Pakistan pledge to jointly work against climate challenges

SLAMABAD: In an important step towards fostering collaboration, Rwanda and Pakistan on Thursday pledged to strengthen their cooperation in addressing climate change and environmental conservation.

Rwandan Ambassador Fatou Harerimana at a meeting with Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam emphasised the potential for bilateral efforts in areas such as water conservation, smart agriculture, and disaster management, said a statement issued by the ministry.

The meeting held at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination underscored the urgency of joint action to tackle the pressing challenges posed by climate change.

Ambassador Harerimana highlighted the longstanding relationship between the two

nations, spanning over six decades, and expressed the desire to expand collaboration beyond trade and health to focus on environmental resilience.

“Rwanda and Pakistan share many climate-related challenges, including heat waves, droughts, and water scarcity. By pooling our resources and expertise, we can develop innovative solutions that benefit both countries,” the ambassador remarked.

Discussions at the meeting centred on knowledge exchange, joint research initiatives, and the implementation of green technologies to promote sustainable development. The ambassador noted Rwanda's global recognition for its progressive environmental policies and commitment to renewable energy, reforestation, and conservation.

The Prime Minister's Coordinator expressed Pakistan's enthusiasm for learning from Rwanda's experience in climate adaptation and resilience.

“Pakistan faces significant climate risks, and Rwanda's success in implementing sustainable practices can offer valuable insights for us,” she said.

The two sides agreed on the need for a formal agreement to outline key areas of cooperation, focusing on achieving shared environmental goals, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement targets.

Aisha Humera, Secretary Ministry of Climate Change, added that both the countries faced similar environmental threats, reinforcing the need for collaborative efforts.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1881287/rwanda-pakistan-pledge-to-jointly-work-against-climate-challenges>

UNS Launches First Emission-Free Day of 2025 as Part of Green Campus Initiative

UNS - Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS) Surakarta began the first week of 2025 with an Emission-Free Day, demonstrating its commitment to managing an environmentally friendly campus. This program will be held one day per month, on the first Friday of each month, as part of UNS's Green Campus initiative.

Dr. Ir. Murtanti Jani Rahayu, S.T., M.T., Head of the Green Campus and SDGs Subdirector at UNS, explained that the Emission-Free Day has been implemented at UNS since July 2020. This initiative is rooted in Rector's Regulation Number 827A/UN27/KP/2013 concerning Guidelines for Environmentally Friendly Campus Management at Universitas Sebelas Maret. It also aligns with global challenges encouraging the UNS to participate in campaigns aimed at reducing fossil fuel usage.

“Emission-Free Day at UNS is a positive response to the Zero Emissions Day (Zeday) campaign, a global movement aimed at reducing reliance on fossil fuels,” Dr. Murtanti stated on Friday (3/1/2025).

Speaking to uns.ac.id, she elaborated that the goal of Emission-Free Day is to provide a “day of rest” as part of efforts to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. It also aims to raise awareness about the limited availability of non-renewable resources and to encourage changes in daily habits.

The UNS Green Campus initiative invites its academic community to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors across all aspects



of campus life. Key principles include promoting eco-friendly transportation and addressing climate change.

“The implementation of Emission-Free Day supports the broader goals of the Green Campus initiative, particularly in promoting environmentally friendly transportation. It also aims to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change by fostering a healthier and greener microclimate,” she added.

According to Circular Letter Number 44/UN27/SE/2020 on the Implementation of Emission-Free Day at UNS, several regulations govern this activity. All campus mobility activities must utilize emission-free transportation, walking, or public transportation provided by the university.

The program runs from 6:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Various transportation units provided by UNS will be available for use by the academic community within the campus. Exceptions

are made for emergencies such as accidents, medical needs, fires, and other urgent situations.

For those who must use non-emission-free private vehicles, designated parking areas are available at specific locations, including the parking areas of LPPM/LPPMP, SPMB and BAPSI, the lake canteen, the stadium, the Graduate School, the front of Nurul Huda Mosque, the [Faculty of Law \(FH\) Building I](#), the west side of the Campus Church, the [Faculty of Social and Political Sciences \(FISIP\)](#), and Javanology.

Through Emission-Free Day, UNS reaffirms its commitment to contributing to various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focused on environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation. The initiative reflects the university's vision of fostering a greener, cleaner, and healthier campus environment.

Source: <https://uns.ac.id/en/uns-launches-first-emission-free-day-of-2025-as-part-of-green-campus-initiative/>



Women, children with disabilities given essential equipment

A distribution ceremony for hearing aids, prosthetic limbs, and mobility aids was held by Saylani Welfare International Trust at the Saylani Mother and Child Centre, located at Numaish Chowrangi on Friday.

During the event, essential medical equipment, including hearing aids, wheelchairs, hand sticks, walkers, and white canes, were distributed to individuals with disabilities. For the past 20 years, Saylani Welfare International Trust had been providing medical equipment to

those in need. The trust distributed hearing aids to 50 individuals, wheelchairs to 15, and walkers and white canes to more than 50 visually impaired individuals.

The ceremony was attended by Saylani Trust Administrator Wazir Raza, along with other dignitaries. In his address to the audience, Wazir Raza emphasized, "Saylani is a source of support for every distressed soul. Today's distribution aims to empower persons with disabilities and help them lead better lives."

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1263851-women-children-with-disabilities-given-essential-equipment>

In the footsteps of Channa

It has been 12 years since Channa's mother, Sokra, first met a Handicap International social worker.

'He told me that my daughter would be able to walk with a prosthesis. I felt so relieved: there was a future for Channa. It broke my heart to see her crawl at the age when children are just learning to walk...', she told Handicap International at the time.

From a premature baby with an amputated leg...

Channa was born prematurely, tiny and barely weighed a kilo. Shortly after giving birth, her mother, Sokra, discovered that her fingers were deformed and that her left leg was almost hanging loose from her body. That same day, the doctor decided to amputate the leg.

After her introduction to the Handicap International teams, Channa received rehabilitation support and a prosthetic leg.

Since then, she has been a regular visitor to Handicap International's orthoprosthesis centre in Kampong Cham, where she receives a new prosthesis that is perfectly adapted to her height. She can no longer imagine her life without that prosthesis:

'I am so happy with my prosthesis, it changes my life. I can walk and jump rope!'

... to become an independent girl with a passion for geography

Channa is now 14 years old, and passionate about geography and studying maps. Fortunately, she



gets support from her school, which covers her school costs, so that she can fully focus on her studies. And she does so with great enthusiasm: after lessons she often does her homework with a friend.

Thanks to rehabilitation exercises, Channa has regained a lot of independence: she learned to walk, walk and do her daily tasks at home. She travels to school by motorcycle, a 15-minute ride, and can now move around independently, whether on foot, by bike or by motorcycle.

Because her parents are struggling financially, she has to go to the center in Kampong Cham alone, which sometimes makes access to care difficult.

Her parents and grandmother encourage her to perform well at school, so that she can get a stable job later on, preferably in a rehabilitation center. If she fails her

teacher exam, she is thinking about training in prosthetics and orthotics (P&O) so that she can help people who need it. She also wants to learn English in order to work with Handicap International one day.

Spokesperson for people with disabilities

Channa is often involved in actions to make people aware of the challenges of people with disabilities. She explains that people with disabilities in Cambodia often do not get the same opportunities as others and face discrimination.

She encourages anyone with a disability to go to a rehabilitation center for the necessary support and more independence.

For Channa, inclusion means that children with disabilities can make their voices heard, stand up for their rights and become better connected to their communities.

Source: <https://www.handicapinternational.be/nl/news/in-de-voetsporen-van-channa--12-jaar-later>

Challenging Perceptions of Disability in Fitness



NICK MCALLISTER

Connor Johnstone, a personal trainer with cerebral palsy, and Shaznaye Bin Kali, a 15-year-old gym-goer with hemiplegia, are breaking barriers in the fitness world. Connor, with a degree in sports science and a master's in strength and conditioning, demonstrates that physical disabilities are no obstacle to excelling in a demanding career.

Shaznaye thrives in weekly training sessions with personal trainer Grant Gillon, enjoying activities like lat pulldowns, tennis, and footy. Grant, diagnosed with ADHD later in life, uses his experiences to empathize and connect with clients, ensuring Shaznaye's safety through tailored support and adaptive equipment.

Both Connor and Grant advocate for inclusivity in fitness, emphasizing the importance of passion and persistence. They encourage others with disabilities to embrace their aspirations, proving that the gym can be accessible and empowering for everyone.

Labour to Overhaul Disability Benefits Amid £3bn Welfare Cuts Plan



Labour is set to implement major reforms to sickness and disability benefits in early 2025, building on the proposals in its "Get Britain Working Again" white paper. A public consultation will launch in spring 2025 to redesign the system and address longstanding challenges in supporting disabled people and those with long-term illnesses into work.

The reforms aim to cut £3 billion from the welfare budget over four years while addressing the rising number of people on benefits due to long-term illness. Changes to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) are expected to tighten eligibility criteria, potentially reducing the number of recipients. The overhaul also prioritizes revising the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), which has been criticized for its stringent approach to assessing benefit eligibility.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesperson emphasized the government's commitment to tackling the root causes of rising benefit dependency and ensuring better support for individuals. The reforms aim to "get people into work and keep them in work," particularly focusing on young people and those capable of employment.

However, disability advocacy groups have raised concerns about the impact of stricter benefit conditions. Louise Rubin, head of policy at Scope, warned that forcing unwell individuals to seek work could have disastrous consequences. Rubin acknowledged the positive rhetoric around supporting disabled people who wish to work but highlighted widespread anxiety over the planned changes.

The Treasury confirmed that Labour will align with the previous government's plans to cut £3bn in

welfare spending, though it denied replicating specific Conservative measures. Critics argue that the focus on tightening benefits eligibility risks penalizing vulnerable individuals.

A Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) spokesperson defended the reforms, stating that they address a "spiraling benefits bill" while aiming to support disabled individuals into meaningful employment. Disability charities, however, have called for a more nuanced approach that recognizes not everyone can work.

The consultation in spring 2025 will play a critical role in shaping the reforms, as Labour balances fiscal goals with ensuring adequate support for disabled and ill citizens.

Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/dwp-pip-2025-labour-update-benefits-disability-b2672382.html>

China Deepens Health Cooperation with Djibouti Through TCM and Medical Initiatives

Beijing has intensified health collaboration with Djibouti, its strategic African partner and home to China's sole overseas military base, focusing on dengue fever and establishing Djibouti's first traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) center. Djiboutian Health Minister Ahmed Robleh Abdilleh, an advocate for TCM, pledged to promote its culture during a recent meeting in Beijing with China's National Health Commission director.

China plans to train 1,300 overseas health workers in TCM over three

years, highlighting therapies like acupuncture, massage, and cupping, particularly for Belt and Road Initiative partners. Chinese medical teams, in collaboration with the Hong Kong-based GX Foundation, have supported Djibouti's health initiatives for years.

Leung Chun-ying, GX Foundation's founder and former Hong Kong leader, emphasized TCM's cost-effectiveness and non-invasive alternatives to Western medicine,

particularly for conditions like nerve paralysis and injury recovery. He noted its suitability for developing regions due to affordability and local producibility.

During Leung's visit, GX celebrated its 17,000th global cataract surgery and 3,300 operations in Djibouti, part of a mission to combat blindness in underdeveloped nations. These efforts underscore China's growing health diplomacy in Africa, aligning with broader geopolitical and economic objectives.



Source: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3292427/chinas-health-bonds-strategic-african-partner-djibouti-grow-closer-over-tcm>

One Million Malaysians Struggle with Depression Amid Stigma and Resource Gaps

KUALA LUMPUR: Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad revealed that one million Malaysians aged 15 and above, or 4.6%, suffer from depression, a doubling since 2019, as per the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023. Experts warn that stigma, resource shortages, and rural healthcare gaps hinder effective mental health management.

Psychiatrist Prof Dr Ng Chong Guan highlighted the alarming prevalence of depression among adolescents, with 26.9% meeting diagnostic criteria, particularly females at 36.1%. Suicidal thoughts affect 13.1% of youth, underscoring the urgency for intervention.

Dr Ng attributed delayed help-seeking to stigma and self-perceptions, particularly among low-income groups. Rural areas face pronounced challenges, with only 500 psychiatrists nationwide, far below the WHO's recommended ratio of 1:10,000. Sabah and Sarawak report mental health prevalence rates as high as 43%.

Non-governmental organizations, such as the Malaysian Mental Health Association (MMHA), play a vital role in bridging gaps, offering subsidized services, and fostering mental health literacy. Workplace mental health also remains a concern, with stigma leading employees to avoid seeking help due to fears of discrimination, noted occupational health specialist Dr Shawaludin Husin.

Stress from financial, relational, and workplace pressures exacerbates issues, with 40,000 civil servants identified as high-risk under the MyPsyD system. Efforts such as MOH's "Let's Talk Minda Sihat" and models like Mental Health First Aid aim to reduce stigma and promote early intervention.

Dr Ng and Dr Shawaludin stressed that a multifaceted approach involving government, NGOs, and communities is essential to address Malaysia's mental health crisis.

Source: <https://thesun.my/malaysia-news/social-stigma-hindering-nation-s-mental-health-management-efforts-experts-EB13470026>





NGO implements project to reduce HIV/TB stigma, discrimination in UWR

Wa, (UW/R), Jan. 06, GNA - HERO NETWORK, a Non-governmental Organisation (NGO), has initiated a project in the Upper West Region geared towards reducing stigma and discrimination related to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Tuberculosis (TB), which are drivers of the spread of these viruses in the country.

The two-year, "Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Project," would be implemented in the Wa Municipality and Nadowli-Kaleo District from 2025 to 2026.

It was funded by the Global Fund under its G7 programme through the Ghana-West Africa Programme to Combat AIDS and STI (WAPCAS) to sensitise people on the need to shun stigma and discrimination against persons infected with HIV and TB.

Speaking at a meeting with stakeholders in Wa including members of the Wa Municipal Health Committee at the weekend, Mr Benjamin Buabeng, the Programme Manager of HERO NETWORK, said stigma and discrimination were

major setbacks to the fight against the spread of HIV and TB.

He observed that people living with HIV in Ghana suffered discrimination in all spheres of life including churches, social groupings, and homes among others, which deterred other people from testing and going for medications.

"People are not even free to do the HIV testing because there is fear of stigma and discrimination, those who have tested, know their status and are positive, are not going for their medication because of the fear of same stigma and discrimination," Mr Buabeng explained.

The Programme Manager indicated that the project, therefore, sought to enlighten the public on the impact of HIV and TB-related stigma and discrimination on the public as it puts every person at risk of contracting those viruses.

He added that it was also to contribute to achieving the 2030 global agenda of 95-95-95 (ensure that by 2030, 95 per cent of people living with HIV know their HIV status,

95 per cent of people diagnosed with HIV receive antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 95 per cent of people on ART achieve viral suppression).

Mis Alexandra Ayanful, the Project Coordinator at HERO NETWORK, stated that lack of or limited knowledge of HIV and TB led to the stigma and discrimination against persons living with those conditions.

She, however, indicated that stigma and discrimination were barriers to achieving global health goals and needed a well-coordinated and multi-sectoral approach including monetary and legal reforms and evidence-based interventions to address.

Naa Osman Daudi, Sunche Naa, the Chairperson of the Wa Municipal Health Committee, expressed gratitude to the NGO for extending the project to the Municipality.

He said the committee welcomed any intervention that would help contribute to enhancing healthcare service delivery to the people.

Source: <https://gna.org.gh/2025/01/ngo-implements-project-to-reduce-hiv-tb-stigma-discrimination-in-uwr/>



NGO Begins Medical Research On Respiratory Health In Ogun

A non-governmental organisation, the C2REST Study Nigeria in collaboration with the Centre for 21st Century Issues has commenced medical research on climate change on respiratory health of residents of Ajegunle in Ado-Odo/Otta Local Government Area of Ogun State.

The project kicked off on Friday at the town hall of the community when the NGO organised its sensitisation and stakeholder meeting with leaders of various groups within the town.

The event provided an avenue for residents of the host community to learn more about climate change and its effects on the planet as well as on humanity.

It (the meeting) also afforded the leadership of the NGO to

sample opinions about issues around climate change as a form of feedback mechanism for its advocacy and research programmes which is expected to span a period of 18 months.

The Coordinator of C2REST Study Nigeria, Dr Obianuju Ozoh, who is also an associate professor of medicine at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, told Saturday Telegraph that "The goal of this study is to understand the effects of Climate Change on respiratory health in this community."

She stated that the research efforts are coming on the heels of an earlier one conducted in Lagos State early in the year and that efforts would be geared towards generating a database for the level or quality of sanitation in the area considering the fact that the local government is one of the industrial hubs of the state.

"We are carrying the project in Ado-Odo/Otta Local Government of Ogun State because this is the place where we have a high-level concentration of industries, so we are going to see the effect of air pollution in this area.

"The goal of this project is to first of all engage members of the community and we have already done that today. We are doing this so that they can understand the effects of climate change, their contributions to climate change," Ozoh said.

The second aspect will be to monitor the health quality in the community by placing gadgets in various parts of the town with the aim of generating data.

Source: <https://newtelegraphng.com/climate-change-ngo-begins-medical-research-on-respiratory-health-in-ogun/>

Tweets of Social Good

AIR POLLUTION AFFECTS OUR VITAL ORGANS

36% of deaths from lung cancer	34% of deaths from strokes	27% of deaths from heart disease

UN VOLUNTEERS

14.500+

UN Volunteers in a single year

END ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

ACT NOW!

IFRC 2024 | 2025

With warm wishes for a peaceful and healthy New Year.

International Labour Organization

I would tell young people that failing in school is not failing in life. I would also urge them to never stop learning.

Hussein Juma Hassan
Welder, Tanzania

THE NGO WORLD signed an MoU with ALKHIDMAT ISLAMIC MICROFINANCE

to voluntarily support the successful implementation of a Cattle Project focused on promoting rural development.

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Millions of children in Nigeria face malnutrition

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Your Story, Our Platform: The NGO World Welcomes Your Contributions

Unleash Your Impact: The NGO World Awaits Your Input

At "The NGO World" magazine, we believe in the power of collective knowledge and shared experiences. We invite our valued readers to become contributors and actively participate in shaping the content of our magazine. Your insights, stories, and perspectives are essential in fostering a sense of community and driving positive change.

If you have a compelling story related to humanitarian work, development initiatives, or social impact that aligns with the diverse sections we cover, we encourage you to share it with us. Whether it's a firsthand account of your involvement in an NGO project, an innovative solution you've come across, or an issue you're passionate about, we want to hear from you.

By actively engaging with "The NGO World," you play a crucial role in expanding our community's knowledge and fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges and solutions within the humanitarian and development sectors.

Together, we can amplify the voices of those working toward positive change and inspire others to make a difference. We look forward to receiving your contributions and continuing our shared mission of creating a better world.

Please send your content submissions via email:

editor@thengoworld.com

ensuring that your submission aligns with one of the sections provided below.

Sections of Magazine:

Here's an expanded list of potential sections for the magazine "The NGO World" to cover a wide range of topics related to humanitarian work, development, and social impact:

Featured NGO Spotlight: Highlighting the work of a specific NGO, sharing their success stories, challenges, and impact.

Global Development News: Covering the latest developments in international development, policy changes, and global issues.

Local Initiatives: Showcasing grassroots projects and initiatives making a difference in local communities

NGO Innovations: Exploring innovative approaches and technologies used by NGOs to address pressing issues.

Humanitarian Crises: In-depth coverage of ongoing humanitarian crises and the response efforts.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Articles focusing on progress and challenges related to achieving the UN's SDGs.

Women Empowerment: Stories of women-led initiatives and efforts to empower women and girls

Youth Engagement: Highlighting the role of youth in driving social change and their involvement in NGOs.

Environment and Conservation: Covering environmental issues, conservation efforts, and climate change initiatives.

Education for All: Articles on educational programs, access to quality education, and innovative teaching methods.

Health and Well-being: Discussing healthcare initiatives, disease prevention, and public health campaigns.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Examining the CSR efforts of businesses and their impact on communities.

Refugee and Migration Issues: Coverage of refugee crises, resettlement programs, and the experiences of displaced people.

Tech for Good: Exploring how technology is used for humanitarian purposes, from apps to drones.

NGO Profiles: Brief profiles of various NGOs, their missions, and achievements.

Volunteer Stories: Personal accounts from volunteers who have contributed to NGOs and their experiences.

Funding and Grants: Updates on available funding opportunities for NGOs and how to apply.

Policy and Advocacy: Discussions on policy changes affecting NGOs and their advocacy efforts.

Impact Assessment: Articles on measuring and evaluating the impact of NGO projects and programs.

Partnerships and Collaborations: Exploring successful partnerships between NGOs, governments, and businesses.

Disaster Response and Preparedness: Coverage of disaster relief efforts, preparedness strategies, and recovery stories.

Microfinance and Economic Empowerment: Exploring initiatives that empower communities economically.

Indigenous Rights and Cultural Preservation: Articles on efforts to protect and preserve indigenous cultures and traditions.

Human Rights and Social Justice: Discussions on human rights issues, social justice movements, and advocacy work.

Arts and Culture for Change: Showcasing how art and culture are used as tools for social change and awareness.

Inspirational Interviews: Exclusive interviews with prominent figures in the humanitarian and development sectors, sharing their insights, experiences, and visions for positive change.

Philanthropy and Impactful Giving: Exploring the impact of philanthropic efforts, featuring interviews with philanthropists and discussions on effective giving strategies.

NGO Leadership and Management: Articles on leadership skills, management practices, and organizational development within the NGO sector, providing insights for NGO professionals and leaders

These sections offer a comprehensive view of the multifaceted work being done in the realm of humanitarianism, development, and social impact.

Submit your stories for upcoming edition & for queries, suggestion, feedback

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Live For Others



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editor@thengoworld.com