

## NHDR 2015 – Report on Consultation with Youth Group

### A. Basic Data

Location	Space Era Model School, Buni, Upper Chitral
Date & Time	25 Dec. 2014, 11:15 am - 12:15 pm
Topic	National Human Development Report
Participant Profiles	17 participants, 12 female, 5 male, aged between 16 and 27
UNDP Team	Muntazir Ali (Research Analyst)

### B. Overview

This session was initially planned with volunteers of the Ispru Youth Forum Chitral (IYFC), a youth advocacy group based in Buni, Upper Chitral. In the end, however, the participants included more volunteers who worked with various groups other than IYFC. Also, there were more female participants than expected, and they tended to be older, more educated, and more vocal than the male participants. Most of the male participants had to be encouraged to contribute to the discussion, while the females were very forthcoming with their views. The participants had no objection to being photographed, and the session being recorded.

### C. Key issues & themes

- Most of the participants were of the view that there should be one syllabus for all school across Pakistan, that teachers should be appointed through credible tests, rather than family/political connections, and properly trained before they can teach.
- Most of the participants said that they chose their fields of study on the basis of their own interests, however, a few of the younger female participants (10<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> year students) said that it was their parents who chose for them. Interestingly, it was educated parents who had a much more say in the decisions of their children regarding choice of subjects than uneducated parents.
- All participants agreed that they should have more subjects to choose from in their 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> year classes.
- The participants were of the view that in most schools and colleges the emphasis is on completion of the course before exams, rather than teaching of basic concepts and their application.
- Almost all of them said that they had cheated at some point in their academic career. They blamed the examination system, and different standards of strictness for 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> year exams.
- Almost all the participants were more educated than their parents, and thought that their quality of life was better than their parents.
- Most of the female participants had some skill, such as sewing, jewelry making, jam making, acquired through training workshops of various NGOs. Most of them however were not able to put their skills to use because of the social environment

which they thought was not conducive to entrepreneurship, lack of capital and infrastructure.

- There was a marked preference for government jobs among the male participants. Most of the female participants, on the other hand, said that they hoped to own businesses one day, despite the prevailing difficulties.
- Most of the female participants who had voted in the last elections hoped that their votes would have some impact on how decisions were made for their area.
- Almost all male participants thought that things would not be better in Pakistan in 2020. They referred to possible martial law, thus halting all 'development', new terrorist groups initiating activities in Pakistan, and unchanging 'mindsets' as their fears. The female participants, however, appeared very optimistic and hoped that increasing 'education' will lead to awareness, thus better decisions for development and in electing political representatives, and increased use of technology making lives more comfortable.
- All female participants saw a role for youth in changing the status quo, while most of the male participants thought it was only the government that could initiate and implement change.
- Most of the female participants said that they had little say on matters outside their homes, while males got more opportunity to voice their opinions. The male participants were content in voicing their views, while most of the female participants wanted their views to have some impact on decisions.
- Most of the female participants said that they used internet for information (preparing for presentations, documentaries), while the male participants used it for entertainment. Most of the participants said that their main sources of news were TV news channels and facebook.
- The participants said that they used mobile phones for chatting, listening to songs and for making calls.
- Most of their fears revolved around financial stability, lack of conducive environment for entrepreneurship, and terrorism.

#### **D. Interesting quotes**

- "There is an education mafia which decides what kind of education we receive. Political leaders sometime make promises that they will close private schools and colleges. But, how can they close private institutions when they are owned by some of the same politicians who make our education policy?" *Male, 19*
- "We usually expect the government to do such and such; we must realize that the government cannot take care of everything. Youth must take responsibility." *Female, 17*
- "I want to start my own clothing line, but there is not much social acceptability for that kind of work." *Female, 24*