Raah-e-Amn: Peace Circle with Religious Minorities (Children)

Social Action Project (SAP)



Organized By: Sahil Kashwani & Hassan (Social Action Project Grantees)
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1-INTRODUCTION:

The Centre for Youth Development & Engagement (CYDE) is a youth-led organization working on peacebuilding, social cohesion, youth capacity development, and inclusive community engagement. The organization focuses on strengthening harmony among diverse communities through experiential learning, dialogue-based interventions, and child- and youth-centered programming aligned with sustainable development principles.

Raah-e-Amn: Peace Circle with Religious Minorities (Children) was designed under CYDE's peacebuilding initiative to promote inclusion, emotional safety, and interfaith understanding among school-going children. The project was implemented in Shah Latif School, Sangrar, Sukkur, where children from Muslim and Hindu communities' study together but have limited structured opportunities for dialogue on diversity, communication, and peaceful coexistence. The intervention aimed to transform peace from a theoretical concept into a lived behavioral practice by engaging children through interactive, reflective, and experiential activities that connect peace with everyday actions, communication patterns, emotional regulation, and respectful behavior.

2-*Summary of Raah E Amn*:

Raah-e-Amn was implemented as a highly interactive peace education session designed for children aged 13 to 17 years. The activity focused on experiential learning ensuring that children could understand peace through participation, reflection, and lived experience. The session included a series of structured activities such as a welcome circle, "What is Peace?" mystery box exercise, Chinese Whisper communication game, balloon emotional release activity, storytelling sessions on child safety and inclusion, and role-based activities focused on bullying, exclusion, and calling names. These activities were designed to help children recognize how everyday behaviors such as teasing, name-calling, exclusion from groups, and misinformation contribute to conflict and emotional harm. Through these activities, children gradually shifted from a narrow understanding of peace as "absence of conflict" to a broader understanding of peace as respectful behavior, inclusion, emotional regulation, and responsible communication.

2.1- Facilitators' Profile:

The session was facilitated by **Sahil Kashwani**, a Soft Skills Trainer, Salamati Fellow, YLC Alumnus, and Founder of Amn Bargah. He is an experienced facilitator working in the areas of child-centered peace education, emotional learning, and community-based dialogue processes. His facilitation approach focuses on experiential learning, storytelling, emotional reflection, and safe-space creation. He specializes in engaging children and youth through interactive methods that help translate abstract concepts such as peace, inclusion, and respect into practical behavioral understanding. His work emphasizes empathy-building, communication skills, and social cohesion in diverse and multi-faith environments.

2.2- Participants' Profile:

Sr#	Female	Male	Transgender	Others	Total
1	**17**	**27**	**-**	**-**	**44**

The activity engaged a total of 44 participants, including children from both Muslim and Hindu communities studying in the same school environment. The participants were aged between 13 to 17 years, representing early to mid-adolescence, a critical stage for identity formation, emotional development, and social behaviours shaping. The group consisted of children from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds within Sukkur district. Gender representation included both male and female students, ensuring inclusive participation in all activities and discussions.

3-SESSION WISE PROCEEDINGS:

The session began with a welcome circle where children were encouraged to introduce themselves in a friendly and informal environment. This initial activity helped reduce hesitation and created a safe and inclusive atmosphere for participation. Following this, a "What is Peace?" mystery box activity was conducted, where children categorized behaviors into positive (green side) and negative (barren side) aspects. This activity helped identify initial perceptions of peace, revealing that most children associated peace only with the absence of conflict. Through guided discussion, they began to understand peace as active behavior involving respect, kindness, and inclusion.

A Chinese Whisper activity was then conducted to demonstrate how communication distortion occurs when messages are not carefully listened to or accurately passed on. Children observed how small changes in communication can lead to misunderstandings, which often escalate into conflict or negative labeling among peers. A balloon-based emotional activity was introduced where children wrote negative emotions or thoughts on balloons. The inflation represented emotional buildup, and the bursting represented emotional release. This helped children understand how unmanaged emotions can result in harmful behaviors such as shouting, teasing, or calling names.

A key interactive component of the session focused on bullying, exclusion, and calling names through role-based scenarios. Children acted out real-life situations where a student is excluded or teased and then re-enacted the same situation with positive behavior such as inclusion, empathy, and respectful communication. This contrast helped children clearly understand the emotional impact of harmful behaviors and the importance of inclusion in maintaining peace.

Two storytelling activities were also conducted, one focused on child protection (good touch and bad touch awareness) and the other focused on peace, diversity, bullying, exclusion, and misinformation. Children worked in groups to discuss and present moral lessons from these stories.
The session concluded with certificate distribution and a tree plantation commitment activity, where children were encouraged to take responsibility for environmental care in groups. This reinforced the concept of collective responsibility and long-term commitment to positive behavior.








4-PARTICIPANTS QUOTES:

"I used to think it is normal when friends call names or tease each other, but today I understood that it can hurt someone deeply. Even small words can break someone's confidence. I will avoid doing this now." ***(Lakshmi – Female Participant, Sangrar)***

"When the whisper message changed at the end, I felt how easily misunderstandings happen in real life. Sometimes fights start just because someone did not listen properly. I learned I should listen carefully before reacting." ***(Narjis – Female Participant, Sangrar)***

"Today I learned that peace is not a big word. It is actually how we behave in school every day, especially how we treat classmates who are different from us or sit alone." ***(Ashok – Male Participant, Sangrar)***

"The session clearly showed that children already experience issues like bullying, exclusion, and miscommunication but rarely recognize them as peace-related concerns. Once engaged through activities, they quickly connected these experiences to their own lives. Despite challenges, participation stayed strong due to the interactive approach. The key outcome was a visible shift in how children began defining peace as behavior, not theory. The interfaith setting also showed natural openness when a safe space is provided. Overall, the session confirmed that peace education at this age is essential for shaping respectful and empathetic behavior."

Sahil Kashwani - Facilitator, Sukkur)

5-Challenges:

The implementation of the activity faced several contextual challenges. A major challenge was the last-minute change in community participation due to the tragic deaths of two community members, after which they requested that only children participate. This required immediate adaptation of facilitation approach while maintaining emotional sensitivity and respect for the community situation. Another challenge was the restriction on photography and mobile usage imposed by the community, which limited documentation. This was managed through a trusted local villager who assisted in capturing necessary visuals while respecting community boundaries.

The remote location of the venue created logistical limitations including infrastructure constraints and environmental discomfort. Additionally, language barriers required facilitators to use simplified local language communication, storytelling, and demonstration-based methods to ensure clarity and engagement. Electricity instability and short-lived audio support further affected facilitation, requiring a shift to voice-based delivery and highly interactive engagement methods.

6-Lesson Learnt:

The activity demonstrated that children are highly receptive to experiential learning when abstract concepts such as peace are connected to real-life behaviors. It was observed that issues such as bullying, exclusion, and name-calling are often normalized in school environments, but children

are capable of quickly understanding their emotional and social impact when presented through interactive methods. The session also highlighted the importance of safe spaces in encouraging participation, especially in interfaith settings. Additionally, it reinforced that behavioral change is more effectively achieved through experience, reflection, and emotional engagement rather than theoretical instruction.

7-Conclusions & Recommendations:

Raah-e-Amn successfully achieved its objective of transforming children's understanding of peace from a passive concept into an active behavioral practice. The intervention demonstrated that inclusion, empathy, and respectful communication can be effectively nurtured at an early age through structured experiential learning.

It is recommended that similar peace education interventions be integrated into school-level programming on a regular basis to strengthen emotional intelligence, reduce bullying behaviors, and promote inclusion. Future programming should continue to incorporate interactive methodologies, storytelling, and role-based learning to ensure sustained behavioral impact. Strengthening interfaith and inclusion-based activities at school level can significantly contribute to long-term social cohesion and reduce early-stage behavioral conflicts among children.