Sughar Kachehri: Reviving Resilience through Dialogues
Social Action Projects



Organized By Mubarak Ali & Team (Social Action Project Grantee)
May 02, 2026 | Village Arain, Trishakhi, Distt. Shikarpur

1-INTRODUCTION: Please provide brief introduction of organization and the project

The Sughar Kachehri is a traditional Sindhi folk wisdom-based dialogue forum rooted in the indigenous Otaak system, historically used as a communal space for reflection, dispute resolution, and collective decision-making. It represents an intergenerational knowledge structure where elders, youth, and community stakeholders engage in meaningful dialogue grounded in lived experience rather than formal institutional frameworks. The revival of this space under the current initiative reflects a deliberate effort to reconnect communities with their cultural systems of learning, governance, and social harmony.

This activity was implemented under the Amn Rang Peace Project by the Centre for Youth Development and Engagement in collaboration with Chanan Development Association. The project focuses on peacebuilding, climate resilience, youth engagement, and community-driven transformation through culturally rooted methodologies. By reviving indigenous platforms like the Otak, the project aims to strengthen social cohesion and promote locally grounded responses to contemporary challenges such as climate change, educational gaps, and weakening community structures.

2-Activity: Please provide brief summary of the activity (Also include a group activity picture)

The Sughar Kachehri was conducted as a community-based dialogue session in Village Arain, District Shikarpur, within a traditional Otak setting. The purpose was to revive indigenous knowledge systems and create a shared space for intergenerational reflection on pressing social and environmental issues. The session brought together elders, youth, and local community members in an open and inclusive environment where storytelling, lived experiences, and collective analysis shaped the flow of dialogue.

A total of approximately 32-35 male participants, aged between 16 and 60 years, actively engaged in the activity. The event was facilitated by Mr. Ali Aqsam, Project Lead, The Peace Project, and Mr. Mubarak Ali, Social Action Project Grantee, along with three student volunteers. The facilitation approach remained participatory and non-hierarchical, ensuring that the Otaak functioned in its traditional spirit of equality and shared dialogue.

Discussions focused on climate resilience, education, indigenous governance systems, and community-led adaptation practices, with participants sharing lived experiences from the 2022 floods and broader socio-economic challenges.

2.1- Facilitators' Profile: Please add a facilitator brief profile who facilitated the activity.

Mr. Ali Aqsam served as the core facilitator of the Sughar Kachehri. He is a social development practitioner with extensive experience in youth capacity building, climate resilience, and indigenous knowledge systems. As the Project Lead of The Peace Project, he has been actively engaged in designing and facilitating community-based interventions that connect traditional wisdom with contemporary development challenges.

His facilitation approach is rooted in participatory dialogue, cultural contextualization, and non-intrusive engagement, allowing communities to lead the conversation while providing subtle direction to ensure thematic depth. His expertise in peacebuilding and community engagement enabled the effective revival of the Otaak as a functional space for collective reflection and social learning.

Mr. Mubarak Ali, the Social Action Project Grantee, co-facilitated the session and played a key role in coordination, community mobilization, and on-ground execution. Along with student volunteers, he supported logistical arrangements and ensured smooth operational flow throughout the activity.

2.2- Participants' Profile: Please add a summary of participants' profiles, including their demographics, gender disaggregation, etc.

Sr #	Female	Male	Transgender		Others	Total
1.		**37**				**37**

The absence of female participants was primarily due to contextual cultural constraints in the specific gathering space, which was conducted in a male-dominated rural Otak environment. However, the dialogue maintained inclusive thematic representation of broader community perspectives, including household-level experiences shared indirectly through male participants.

3-SESSION WISE PROCEEDINGS:

Please provide detailed description of each of the session (Also include activity pictures),

The session commenced with the revival of the traditional Otak space, arranged in an open circular setting to ensure equality and unrestricted communication among participants. The opening dialogue, facilitated by Ali Aqsam, emphasized the importance of indigenous knowledge systems in shaping community resilience and social harmony. Participants were encouraged to engage freely, without formal restrictions, allowing the Otak to function in its culturally authentic form.

The first dialogue phase focused on intergenerational knowledge sharing. Elders shared historical narratives of how the Otak once served as a central institution for governance, conflict resolution, and social coordination. These reflections highlighted the strength of collective decision-making in traditional Sindhi society. Youth participants responded with contemporary concerns, particularly related to education gaps, lack of skill development opportunities, and the weakening connection between formal education and local livelihood systems. This exchange created a natural bridge between historical continuity and present-day challenges.

The second session focused on climate resilience and lived experiences of environmental change. Participants shared detailed accounts of the 2022 floods, describing impacts such as displacement, destruction of agricultural land, and loss of livelihoods. These narratives were deeply personal and reflected both vulnerability and resilience, as communities also described collective recovery efforts and mutual support systems that enabled survival and rebuilding.

A significant dimension of the dialogue was the exploration of environmental understanding through both spiritual and scientific lenses. While some participants initially attributed climate changes to divine will, facilitated dialogue encouraged reflection on human-driven environmental factors such as deforestation and ecological neglect. This approach created a respectful expansion of understanding rather than a rejection of belief systems, allowing participants to integrate multiple perspectives. The final session involved an open-floor discussion where key community members synthesized earlier conversations. The dialogue naturally transitioned into informal interaction, followed by a shared refreshments session, which reinforced social bonding and extended the learning environment beyond structured facilitation.

The activity concluded with a reflection session where participants shared their experiences, learnings, and future commitments. Many participants reflected on how the session changed their understanding of leadership and inspired them to think about their social roles differently. Following this, certificates and traditional soveniers along with some books that were donated to us, were distributed to all participants as recognition














4-PARTICIAPNTS QUOTES: Please use the following box to provide participants quote.

Participants reflected deeply on the cultural and social significance of the Otak system, emphasizing that it once functioned as the backbone of community decision-making and social cohesion. Elders expressed that such spaces fostered unity, accountability, and trust within rural society, and highlighted the importance of reviving these systems for contemporary community development.

Youth participants shared concerns regarding education and livelihood disconnects, emphasizing that formal education often lacks practical alignment with rural economic realities. They expressed the need for skill-based learning systems that can better support youth employment and community sustainability.

Several participants narrated their experiences of the 2022 floods, describing both the devastation they witnessed and the collective resilience that followed. A common sentiment was that while external assistance was limited, community solidarity played a crucial role in recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Participants also noted a gradual shift in climate understanding during the dialogue, acknowledging that while spiritual interpretations remain important, human activities significantly contribute to environmental change. This reflection demonstrated openness to integrated knowledge systems and strengthened awareness around environmental responsibility.

5-Challenges: How did it impact the activity and how did you or intend to overcome the challenge.

One significant challenge was the sudden withdrawal of several registered participants due to agricultural labor demands imposed by a local landholder during wheat harvesting season. This reduced expected participation and created temporary disruption in planned attendance. However, the facilitation team adapted by proceeding with available participants and ensuring continuity of dialogue without compromising the quality of engagement.

A second major challenge occurred just hours before the event when a key facilitator with strong academic expertise in Latifiyat and Otak-based cultural systems experienced a sudden family tragedy due to an accidental death. This unexpected incident affected team morale and created a gap in planned facilitation roles. Despite this, the team demonstrated resilience by redistributing responsibilities, with Ali Aqsam assuming full facilitation leadership.

Both challenges were managed through adaptive coordination, emotional resilience, and collective commitment to the purpose of the initiative. The decision to continue the activity ensured that community engagement objectives were successfully achieved despite unforeseen disruptions.

6-Lesson Learnt: Please share with any lessons you have learnt during the implementation of this activity.

The activity reaffirmed that indigenous spaces such as the Otaak remain highly relevant for contemporary community dialogue and social learning. These spaces naturally facilitate intergenerational exchange, allowing communities to reflect on both historical continuity and present-day challenges without external imposition.

It was also learned that community resilience is deeply embedded in informal social systems, particularly in rural contexts where formal institutional support is limited. Furthermore, integrating culturally sensitive facilitation approaches enables meaningful shifts in perception, especially on complex issues such as climate change, without creating resistance or conflict.

7-Conclusions & Recommendations: Please provide summary or bullet points of the key takeaways (outputs) or action points that needs follow-up or that needs to be taken into consideration for future programming.

The Sughar Kachehri demonstrated that reviving indigenous knowledge systems can serve as an effective and culturally grounded approach to peacebuilding, climate awareness, and community development. The Otak proved to be a powerful platform for fostering dialogue, reflection, and collective understanding across generations. It is recommended that future programming further institutionalize such indigenous dialogue spaces as part of community development strategies. There is also a need to expand participation to include women and marginalized groups in culturally appropriate formats, ensuring broader inclusivity. Additionally, integrating structured follow-up mechanisms can help translate dialogue outcomes into actionable community-led initiatives.

Strengthening linkages between traditional knowledge systems and modern development frameworks will enhance sustainability, ownership, and long-term impact of such interventions.

Annexures: Please attach the

- Agenda
- Attendance sheet (in Excel and scanned PDF)
- Link of Google Drive with pictures and videos
- Media coverage, if any
- Feedback/evaluation forms