



# WOMEN'S VOICE AND LEADERSHIP-PAKISTAN

2020 - 2024

FOUR-YEAR TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY TOWARDS GENDER JUST ORGANIZATION

## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Acronyms .....   | 2  |
| 2. Foreword .....   | 3  |
| 3. Feminist Principles for Gender Just Organization .....                             | 4  |
| 4. Project Introduction 'Women's Voice and Leadership - Pakistan' .....               | 5  |
| 5. Progressing towards a Gender Just Organization through Transformative Change ..... | 7  |
| 6. Creating Women Friendly Spaces & Transforming Young Leadership .....               | 10 |
| 7. Institutional Strengthening .....  | 11 |
| 8. Staff Self and Collective Care .....   | 14 |
| 9. Catalyst of Change - WVLP's Impact on People's Lives .....                         | 16 |
| 10. Strengthened Networking .....   | 32 |
| 11. Project's Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability .....              | 37 |
| and Impact Measurement (REESI)  |    |

### Disclaimer

The information contained in this booklet, is sole responsibility of WISE and do not necessarily represent the views of Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Oxfam.



## Acronyms

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| GAC     | Global Affairs Canada                                 |
| CAT4GJO | Capacity Assessment Tool for Gender-Just Organization |
| GLP     | Gender Leadership Program                             |
| LUMS    | Lahore University of Management Sciences              |
| NADRA   | National Database and Registration Authority          |
| NPO     | Not for Profit Organization                           |
| OiP     | Oxfam in Pakistan                                     |
| PCP     | Pakistan Center for Philanthropy                      |
| PCSW    | Punjab Commission on the Status of Women              |
| PESSI   | Punjab Employees Social Security Institution          |
| PFUJ    | Punjab Federal Union of Journalists                   |
| PMAR    | Pakistani Men Against Rape                            |
| WMW     | World March of Women                                  |
| WVL     | Women's Voice and Leadership                          |

## Foreword



**Bushra Khaliq**  
Executive Director  
January 2024

In Pakistan, women and girls are among the most vulnerable to having their human rights violated. The booklet invites to explore the transformative journey of Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE) under 'Women's Voice and Leadership' project over the past four years. It serves as a comprehensive overview of our organization's commitment to becoming a gender-just entity. Since its inception, WISE has been working diligently to shape a narrative that not only reflects its efforts towards gender just organization but also contributes significantly to the broader conversation on women's empowerment and gender equality.

Under the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) project, WISE delved into key areas aimed at amplifying women's voices and fostering their leadership roles. This booklet sheds light on the initiatives, challenges, and triumphs that define WISE's involvement in the WVL project. Whether it's promoting young women's leadership, staff self and collective care, safeguarding, advancing feminist monitoring and evaluation practices, strengthening policies & procedures and financial management, or fostering strong connections with networks and alliances, each section offers a glimpse into our dedicated efforts.

Beyond being a reflection of WISE's journey, the booklet in hand is crafted with the intention to resonate with inspirations of women and girls navigating their unique paths towards gender justice. The experiences shared here transcend our organization's narrative, seeking to offer valuable insights and lessons for women and girls aspiring to make their mark in their lives.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated partners; Oxfam, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) in our pursuit for gender equity and justice. Their unwavering support has played a pivotal role in enabling WISE to make impactful contributions to the cause of women's empowerment in Pakistan.

## Feminist Principles for Gender Just Organization

- Recognize power and privilege
- Support transformative change
- Put women's rights actors at the centre of our work
- Honour context and complexity
- Celebrate diversity and challenge discrimination through an intersectional approach
- Nothing about us without us
- Do no harm
- Balance learning and accountability
- Support knowledge for transformative change
- Commit to organizational transformation

## Project Introduction “Women’s Voice and Leadership - Pakistan”

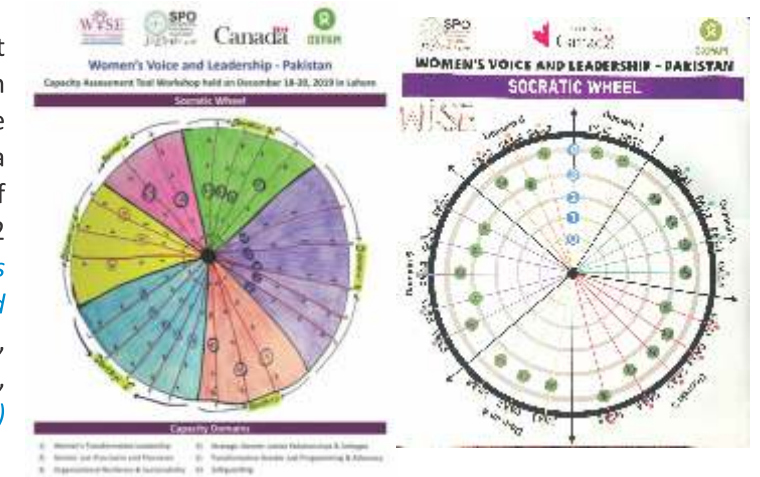
**2.1 Introduction:** This project is part of Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Program by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Oxfam in Pakistan (OiP), which supports local and regional women's organizations and networks that are working to promote women's rights, and advance women's empowerment and gender equality in developing countries. This is done by supporting activities of partner organizations, building institutional capacity, and promoting networks and alliance-building as women's rights and feminist organizations are critical agents of change. The Program also responds to the globally recognized, significant gap in funding and support to women's rights organizations (WROs) and movements around the world.

**2.2 Goal:** To increase Pakistani women and girls' enjoyment of human rights and to advance gender equality in Pakistan by strengthening the individual and collective capacity of women's rights organizations (WROs), women's rights activists, and networks/alliances within the women's movement in Pakistan

**2.3 Expected results:** The expected outcomes for this project include:

- Improved management, programming and sustainability of local women's rights organizations in Pakistan, particularly those representing vulnerable and marginalized women and girls.
- Enhanced delivery of campaigns & programming by WROs to advance gender equality in Pakistan.
- Increased effectiveness of national and sub-national women's rights platforms, networks, and alliances to effect gender-sensitive policy change and implementation in Pakistan.

**2.4 CAT4GJO:** The Capacity Assessment Tool for Gender-Just Organizational Strengthening (CAT4GJO) was initially piloted by Oxfam Canada in 2009, aiming to support women's rights and gender justice initiatives with diverse civil society partners. In 2019, Oxfam Canada updated this toolkit to align with the evolving needs and priorities of organizations in this sector. CAT4GJO involves self-reflection across 22 capacity areas of 6 domains including; Domain-1 (*Women's Transformative Leadership*), Domain-2 (*Gender-Just Structures and Processes*), Domain-3 (*Organizational Resilience and Sustainability*), Domain-4 (*Strategic Gender Justice Relationships and Linkages*), Domain-5 (*Transformative Gender Justice Programming and Advocacy*) and Domain-6 (*Safeguarding*).



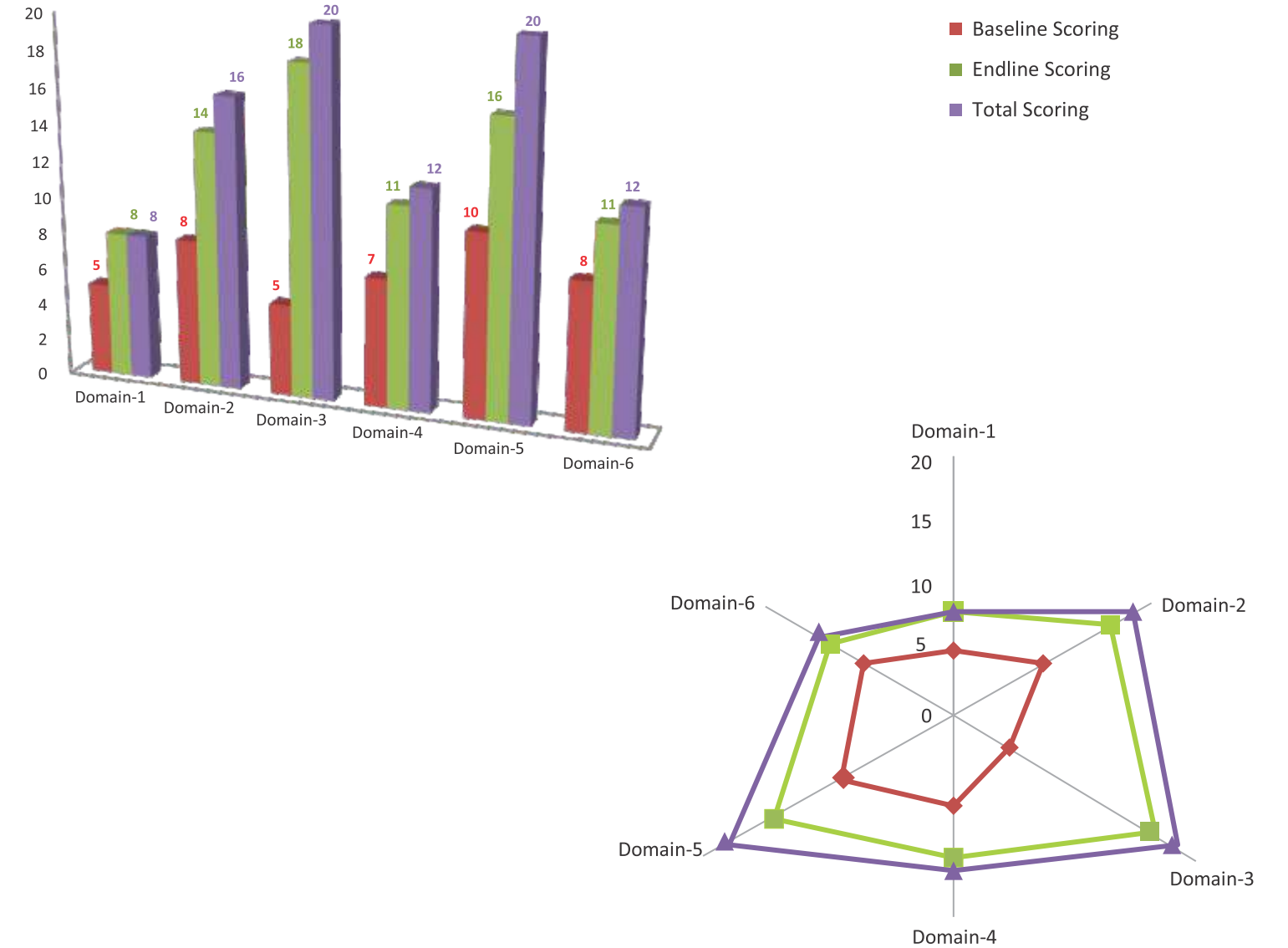
In December 2019, WISE went through a three-day CAT4GJO exercise, assessing its capacities around the said domains and capacity areas. Initially scoring 43 out of 88 points, WISE entered into partnership with Oxfam and Global Affairs Canada. After four years partnership, WISE made significant progress, boosted its structures and procedures and at the end line, self-assessing achieved a score of 77 out of 88, showing a substantial progress, advancing from 48.86% to 87.6% in its total projected scoring, reflecting a commendable 38.75% improvement in its overall capacity assessment.

The detailed scoring breakdown showcases significant improvements across the domains:

**CAT4GJO Findings:**

| Domains   | Total Scoring | Baseline Scoring | Baseline Projected % | End-line Scoring | End-line Projected % | Improved Scoring |
|---|---------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 1) Women’s Transformative Leadership                    | 8             | 5                | 62%                  | 8                | 100%                 | 38%              |
| 2) GenderJust Structures and Processes                  | 16            | 8                | 50%                  | 14.3             | 89%                  | 39%              |
| 3) Organizational Resilience and Sustainability         | 20            | 5                | 25%                  | 17.5             | 88%                  | 63%              |
| 4) Strategic Gender Justice Relationships and Linkages  | 12            | 7                | 58%                  | 10.5             | 88%                  | 29%              |
| 5) Transformative Gender Justice Programming & Advocacy | 20            | 10               | 50%                  | 16               | 80%                  | 30%              |
| 6) Safeguarding   | 12            | 8                | 67%                  | 10.8             | 90%                  | 23%              |
| <b>Total Projection</b>                                 | <b>88</b>     | <b>43</b>        | <b>48.86%</b>        | <b>77.10</b>     | <b>87.6%</b>         | <b>38.75%</b>    |

**CAT4GJO Findings**





### Progressing towards a Gender Just Organization through Transformative Change

WISE is committed to addressing historical power imbalances between women and men through transformative change. This dedication is evident in the organization's pursuit of a gender-just environment. Through strategic initiatives, WISE has embarked on, a comprehensive journey that not only aligns with feminist principles but also integrates them into every operational facet. From inclusive Board representation to program design and staff empowerment, every endeavor undertaken by the organization echoes a firm dedication to achieving gender justice society, where human beings especially women enjoy equity and equal rights. Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Oxfam have supported WISE in its journey towards a Gender-Just Organization under the project "Women's Voice and Leadership".

**3.1 Board Representation and Staff Composition:** The WISE Board's composition, comprising a 100% females, symbolizes the organization's dedication to gender parity at the highest decision-making level. Recognizing imbalance power and privileges between men and women, the organization principally engage 80 to 90% women's staff at all the tiers, which reflects a deliberate effort to create a balanced workforce, promoting inclusivity and diversity across all organizational levels. This commitment not only advocates for gender equality but also amplifies the voices of women in leadership positions.

Given the significance of the feminist principle "Support transformative change," the WISE board, historically composed of esteemed women's rights activists dedicated to promoting and safeguarding women's rights in Pakistan, has taken a forward-thinking action. The board has recently welcomed three young feminists into its fold. This strategic decision is aimed at empowering and amplifying the voices of young girls within the board, reaffirming their pivotal role in steering its direction and initiatives towards more inclusive and progressive paths.

**3.2 Gender-Inclusive Compensation Allocation:** Allocating 84% of the salary budget to female staff represents a strategic initiative aimed at addressing the gender pay gap, aligning with the feminist principle of 'put women's rights actors at the centre of our work and amplifying their voices'. In line with WISE's focus on promoting and protecting women's rights across all projects, prioritizing female representation in positions serves to mitigate power imbalances between men and women, fostering a more equitable working environment.

**3.3 Promoting Inclusive Leadership - Female Heads in Key Departments:** The leadership of female heads in the Admin and Finance Departments symbolizes the commitment to organizational transformation. By having female leadership at the helm of crucial departments, the organization not only provides role models but also actively promotes inclusivity and representation at decision-making levels.

**3.4 Inclusivity - Gender & Minority Representation:** WISE actively celebrates diversity and confronts discrimination through an intersectional approach, driving its persistent commitment to creating an inclusive organizational culture where voices from diverse backgrounds are profoundly valued. This commitment is evident in the employment opportunities extended to young females from target areas, providing pathways to empowerment. Notably, WISE embraces inclusivity by offering opportunities to individuals from marginalized backgrounds, such as the daughters of women domestic workers and brick kiln workers. Among the **17** staff members, **4** belong to minority groups, and **5** come from marginalized communities like rickshaw drivers, brick kiln workers, and domestic workers. Additionally, approximately **8** female staff members are recruited from the local community where WISE operates, reflecting the dedication to fostering inclusion within our operational community.

**3.5 Gender-Sensitive Budgeting and Planning:** Embracing gender-sensitive budgeting and planning reflects the organization's dedication to systematically addressing gender disparities. This strategy guarantees the allocation of financial resources with a keen focus on mitigating gender disparities, thereby laying the groundwork for sustainable and inclusive initiatives tailored for beneficiaries within the organization's targeted areas. This approach is pivotal in addressing gender-based inequalities and fostering lasting, impactful programs.

**3.6 Women's Rights and Gender Justice Focused Advocacy and Campaigning:** WISE is deeply dedicated to advocating for women's rights and fostering gender justice, evident through its comprehensive Organizational Advocacy Plan. This strategic plan encompasses diverse initiatives, including stakeholder consultations and critical analyses focused on enhancing women's political participation within local governments. WISE actively collaborates with the Local Government (LG) and the National Implementation Committee (NIC), prioritizing advocacy for the rights of domestic workers and contributing significantly to the LG Advocacy Group at the provincial level.

WISE actively extends its advocacy efforts to address gender-based issues across diverse service sectors by engaging with influential entities such as the police, Punjab Women Protection Authority, Ombudsperson Punjab, Labour department, Bar associations, educational institutions, media outlets, and parliamentarians. This multifaceted advocacy approach is further reinforced by the organization's strategic alignment with impactful events like Media Forums, 16 Days of Activism, Climate Change Week, International Women's Day, National Working Women's Day, International Domestic Workers Day, and similar occasions. These purposeful advocacy and communication strategies significantly amplify WISE's impactful contributions in championing women's rights and advancing gender justice.

## Creating Women Friendly Spaces & Transforming Young Leadership

Under the WVL-Pakistan Project, WISE has actively promoted transformative change through initiatives focusing on creating women-friendly spaces and nurturing young leadership. We champion transformative change by actively creating women-friendly spaces and fostering young leadership. Offering internships to 30 young girls out of which 9 subsequently promoted to middle-level positions, represents a strategic initiative aimed at providing paid internships to girls from educational institutions and the communities where WISE operates.

WISE also fostered intergenerational learning and exchange by incorporating Youth Empowerment as a thematic area. This program serves as a bridge across generational divides, fostering collaborative learning spaces among staff encompassing diverse age groups and varying work experiences. Through the promotion of interns to pivotal positions, WISE nurtured an environment that fosters empowerment and encourages continuous professional growth.

Facilitating enriching interaction and learning experiences for young girls involves engagements with Board members, renowned feminists, and rights-based activists, both on a national and global scale. These interactions are purposefully designed to offer insightful learning opportunities and exposure to a wide array of diverse perspectives, nurturing their growth and understanding within broader social and global contexts.

WISE proactively engages young female staff members as focal points, granting them invaluable exposure to International, National, and Regional Networks. This intentional involvement cultivates their professional growth and enables them to establish meaningful connections within these diverse spheres, amplifying their networking capabilities and broadening their horizons.

A compelling testament to WISE's approach lies in the trajectories of individuals like Amina Afzal and Fizza Choudhary within the organization. Initiating their journey as interns, both Amina and Fizza underwent Gender and Leadership Training. Their evolution within WISE from interns to esteemed positions as Manager Programs and MEAL Officer respectively, showcases the organization's commitment to nurturing and promoting talent from within.

Furthermore, WISE actively supports young girls' leadership through initiatives like the Safeguarding Club, a platform led by young girls aimed at ensuring a harassment-free work environment for girls and women. This concerted effort by WISE not only creates inclusive spaces for girls but also cultivates transformative leaders, driving positive change within the organization.



## Institutional Strengthening

WISE's institutional advancements and impactful initiatives stand as a witness to the precious support and collaborative efforts extended by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Oxfam under the Women's Voice and Leadership project. Their central role in stimulating WISE's organizational framework across various domains, including policies upgradation, resource mobilization, financial management, and government regulatory certifications, has been transformative. WISE acknowledges the crucial support of GAC and Oxfam, whose partnership has, not only drove its journey towards institutional building but also reinforced its commitment to sustainable societal change focusing gender equality and women's empowerment.

**5.1 Upgradation of Organizational Policies and Strategic Plan:** Oxfam and Global Affairs Canada have been instrumental in supporting WISE's endeavor to upgrade its Organizational Policies and Strategic Plan. Through their support, WISE has experienced a profound transformation, establishing Gender-Responsive Policies and Procedures. This involved an inclusive and participatory approach, engaging Board members, management, staff and beneficiaries at various levels. Rigorous consultations, assessments, and workshops led to the development of a comprehensive policy framework that not only addresses financial and administrative matters but also incorporates safety measures and protection protocols. These efforts ensure a secure and supportive, harassment-free environment for all members and beneficiaries, leading to the organizational resilience and sustainability.

**5.2 Resource Mobilization:** "WISE's commitment to resource mobilization has witnessed significant advancements following strategic training sessions in this domain. The implementation of a well-crafted Resource Mobilization Plan has been pivotal, enabling the successful acquisition of 7 projects, including 4 new, along with the extension of 3 project renewals. These achievements underscore WISE's proactive approach and effective utilization of available resources.

Moreover, the organization has demonstrated insightful foresight by developing a comprehensive Funding Landscape, offering a detailed understanding of potential resource pools. What sets WISE apart is its integration of Gender Responsive Budgeting as a tool in proposal writing, reflecting its resolute commitment to inclusivity and incorporation of feminist principles in program design and implementation.

**5.3 Gender Responsive Financial Management:** WISE has diligently incorporated gender-responsive financial management practices into its operational framework, employing a multi-layered approach. Regular financial reporting, including an Annual Financial Report, Internal Organizational Audit, External Audit, and Project-Specific Audit, underscores the organization's commitment to transparency and accountability. The uses of QuickBooks, mandatory signing of code of conduct and whistle-blowing policy collectively contribute to a strong financial governance structure, evident through a comprehensive Complaint Mechanism. with regulations, ensuring organizational sustainability, and attracting donor support.

Remarkably, WISE has actively engaged five female vendors/suppliers, facilitating three of them in successfully registering their businesses. This initiative not only supports these women in their entrepreneurial endeavors but also reflects WISE's dedication to fostering economic opportunities for female vendors.

**5.4 Feminist Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (FMEAL):** The organization Institutionalized Feminist Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (FMEAL) by applying Feminist Principles to Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability signifies a crucial milestone in establishing the FMEL Department. The participatory FEMEAL approach extends beyond conventional monitoring and evaluation methods, infusing feminist values of inclusivity throughout all stages of program monitoring and evaluation. Innovative tools such as Photo Voice, Dramatization, Story-telling, Cell filming, and Community Radio are introduced to facilitate people's reflections and gather feedback effectively.

**5.5 WISE E-Archive – Improving Data Management:** Maintaining organizational record and collecting records of women social movements, whether in print, digital, or oral form, holds significant importance. These records are often challenging to find, yet they are crucial for preserving the history and contributions of women in social movements.

In view of foregoing, the establishment of the WISE Archives Repository represents a significant step towards preserving institutional knowledge and facilitating access to information and resources. This initiative, aimed at creating an online repository, enables free access to resources and information, preserving the institutional memory, and supporting future research endeavors.



The launch of WISE's Digital Archive marked a significant milestone in academic research. WISE has deposited a decade's worth of work, in this archive including research reports, gender justice campaigns, and feminist actions, catering to researchers and academics.

**5.6 Documentation of a Decade's Journey of WISE:** WISE thoroughly documented and digitalized its ten-year journey dedicated to advancing the women's rights agenda in Pakistan. This comprehensive documentation, presented through video documentaries and poster presentations, captures WISE's decade-long efforts towards gender-just society. This ready material available for researchers, women's rights organizations and donors on WISE's social media platforms.

To commemorate a decade of tireless struggle, WISE created visibility materials showcasing its achievements over the past ten years. A special day-long event was organized, featuring speeches, theatrical performances and music. During this event, WISE's Board, staff, beneficiaries and friends & supporter shared insights thematically about the organization's journey. Over 300 individuals joined this public seminar, gaining a comprehensive understanding of WISE's ten-year struggle for women's rights

**5.7 PCP Certification:** Achieving the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) Certification amplifies WISE's credibility, aiding in compliance with regulations, ensuring organizational sustainability, and attracting donor support.

**5.8 Charity Commission Certification:** Acquiring the 'Charity Commission Certification' signifies adherence to government compliance and regulatory requirements, ensuring the seamless continuation of WISE's work.

**5.9 MoU with EAD:** WISE achieved a significant milestone by formalizing its collaboration through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) for its ongoing projects. This MoU signifies a crucial step forward in solidifying the partnership between WISE and EAD. The agreement is a testament to the credibility and importance of WISE's initiatives, fostering an environment for sustained collaboration and support from governmental bodies like EAD in advocating for women's rights and empowerment within the broader socio-economic landscape.





## Staff Self and Collective Care

The initiatives fostering staff self and collective care at WISE have been made possible through the crucial support of GAC and Oxfam under the Women's Voice and Leadership project. Their facilitation has been instrumental in establishing comprehensive health insurance, provident funds, and old-age benefits, nurturing psychosocial wellbeing. Additionally, their guidance led to the implementation of a mandatory 'Signing of Code of Conduct,' a strong complaint mechanism, and the provision of safe transportation. Together, GAC and Oxfam support underscores a shared commitment to empower staff members and prioritize their well-being within the organizational framework.

### 6.1 Health and Life Insurance, Provident Fund & Employees, Old Age Benefits:

WISE stands firmly committed to the holistic well-being of its employees, offering a comprehensive package that includes productive health and life insurance, provident fund, and old age benefits. Ensuring the health and financial security of our staff remains a top priority. By providing these benefits, WISE aims to create a supportive environment that values and safeguards the livelihoods and future of its team.

So initially, GAC and Oxfam supported this initiative, but subsequently, WISE integrated it within its ongoing projects. Now, these provisions for staff self and collective care are embedded across all ongoing initiatives. When applying for new funding, WISE ensures to allocate a fixed amount for staff welfare, reflecting the organization's commitment to prioritizing the well-being of its team members across all projects.



I was sick, and it was difficult for me to bear my medical expenses. This is a big relief for me that now onwards, I can claim my medical bills from the organisation and access free medical treatment, expressed Sunny, Office boy.

**6.2 Psych-Socio Well-Being:** Recognizing the importance of mental and social well-being, WISE places a strong emphasis on supporting the psychosocial welfare of its employees. The organization offers trainings and resources that prioritize mental health, fostering a supportive atmosphere where individuals can thrive personally and professionally.

**6.3 Annual Retreat:** The annual retreat initiated as part of the Women's Voice and Leadership project has now become an integral and institutionalized practice within WISE. To rejuvenate and reinforce team spirit, WISE organized an annual retreat, a dedicated time for reflection, team-building exercises, and professional development. This retreat serves as a valuable platform for staff members to recharge, bond, and align their efforts toward achieving WISE's mission.

**6.4 Flexible Working Hours for Parents:** Acknowledging the importance of work-life balance, WISE extends flexible working hours for parents among its staff. This initiative allows them to effectively manage their professional commitments while prioritizing their responsibilities as parents, promoting a conducive and family-friendly work environment.

As women, we often overlook our own well-being while caring for others. This training gave me a chance to prioritize my own mental health and taught me how to handle stress effectively."

- Rani Shamim,  
Focal Person

**6.5 Mandatory Signing of 'Code of Conduct':** At WISE, maintaining a culture of integrity and respect is non-negotiable. To ensure a professional and ethical work environment, all employees are required to sign a 'Code of Conduct.' This signifies their commitment to WISE's values and standards.

**6.6 Complaint Mechanism:** Under the umbrella of Staff Self & Collective Care, a new policy on Grievance Settlement has been in place now. This policy introduces a designated settlement committee and ensures staff members are familiar with its procedures. Alongside this, WISE has established a robust complaint mechanism, providing a safe space for reporting grievances and concerns, fostering transparency and accountability and a supportive space for resolution within the organization.

**6.7 Safe Transportation:** Thanks to the support of GAC and Oxfam through the Women's Voice and Leadership project, WISE prioritizes the safety of its employees by providing secure transportation facilities. Ensuring a safe commute for staff members, especially women contribute to their overall well-being and reinforce the organization's commitment to their safety and security.

"I'm immensely thankful to WISE for introducing the Health Policy. It not only provided me with medical leaves but also covered all expenses for my injury, including medications and checkup. This support during a critical injury was a significant relief for me," shared Pervaiz Masih, Office Caretaker.



### Catalyst of Change - WVL-P's Impact on People's Lives

WISE also received core funding under the WVL-P, supported by Oxfam and GAC, strengthening its grassroots efforts in advancing the women's rights agenda. This vital program stands as a catalyst for transformative change, leaving an indelible mark on communities. Initiatives encompassing safeguarding training, facilitating NICs and voter registrations, empowering youth-led initiatives like "Girls on Wheels", Formation of women reflect centers (Aurat Akaths) supporting networks, and developing IEC materials have collectively ignited a transformative wave. Amplifying marginalized voices through documented incidents, the project champions societal shifts, fostering unity, and empowering women and girls to assert their rights, steering impactful and positive change. The milestones achieved under the core program are as follows:

**7.1 Women and girls trainings on Safeguarding:** Throughout the reporting period, the organization conducted comprehensive training sessions on "Safeguarding," engaging 267 women, including journalists, teachers, and young girls. These sessions had a far-reaching impact, with 1156 students and young girls benefitting from the knowledge imparted by the trained participants. These sessions were designed not only to impart essential skills but also to raise awareness about anti-sexual harassment laws and child safeguarding protocols.

In parallel, 50 male and female journalists underwent a dedicated orientation on Safeguarding and Media Ethics, advocating strongly for the implementation of sexual harassment committees and workplace codes of conduct within media outlets.

This number highlights the organizational commitment to fostering safer, more respectful workplaces conducive to dignified work environments.

### Reflections:

- ▲ "Establishing inquiry committees and enforcing stringent penalties is crucial and journalist should play their influential role in shaping public perception on critical issues like harassment, advocating for proactive measures within media organizations to promote safeguarding and conducive work environment for all." emphasized **Qasim Ali Sherazi**, a male journalist from Lahore.
- ▲ **Qamar Zaman Bhatti**, emphasized the urgency of implementing codes of conduct and establishing inquiry committees in media workplaces, aligning with sexual harassment laws to ensure a safe and equitable work environment for all.
- ▲ "The safeguarding training served as a valuable refresher, enlightening me about the repercussions of non-compliance with the law," shared **Tamsila**, a female journalist from Lahore, emphasizing the importance of legal adherence in creating safe workspaces.
- ▲ **Naveen Rooma**, female journalist reflected on using her journalistic platform to address and bring attention to critical issues surrounding sexual harassment, intending to create awareness and advocate for change through her writing.
- ▲ "I feel enlightened about sexual harassment and its complaint procedures. I've gained insight into problem-solving and decision-making, feeling more confident to make informed choices in various situations." - **Maham Shafi**
- ▲ "Attending this training was eye-opening; it taught me essential life skills, decision-making, and problem-solving. I strongly believe in educating our children about safeguarding, ensuring they know what to do if faced with potential abuse." - **Nazish (Teacher)**
- ▲ "As a teacher, I learned about child abuse prevention and engaging with children to educate them about personal safety, especially distinguishing 'bad touch.'" - **Memona**





"This training was an education in sexual harassment and its legal remedies, something I didn't anticipate learning. Now, I feel better equipped to safeguard myself in public and workplace settings." – Javeria



"The training emphasized the importance of speaking out against sexual harassment. I've learned about the laws and mechanisms to report harassment, and I pledge to advocate for women and girls to do the same." – Noor



**7.2 Sensitized Over 2000 Women and Young Girls on Rights Awareness:** Every year, WISE organized a sequence of events spanning International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism, and National Working Women's Day across Lahore, Nankana Sahib, and Sheikhpura districts, catering to both district and community levels. The activities, including social media campaigns, video productions, social media posters and messages, engaged over 2000 women and young girls. These initiatives were aimed at educating participants not only on specific issues concerning women but also highlighting ongoing efforts in safeguarding their rights, fostering an understanding of the significance of these national and international days. Distinguished speakers from various sectors including government departments, media, parliamentarians, CSOs, universities, women's rights activists, and advocates united to promote and protect women's rights. Students, community women, female police officers, RESUCE-1122, and women in traffic police were among the active participants in these impactful events.



## Reflections:

- ▲ "Attending the community seminar 'Refuse the Abuse' empowered me to confidently confront societal patriarchy and refuse any form of abuse, be it towards me or my daughter," expressed **Gul-e Seema**, a participant from Lahore.
- ▲ "Learning about the women's safety app and installing it on my phone has inspired me to spread awareness about it within my community," shared **Nazia Tariq**, a participant from Sheikhpura, during the community seminar.
- ▲ **Noreen**, a bachelor's student, shared, "Attending the International Women's Day celebration was enlightening. The discussions shed light on prevalent women's issues, especially related to their health. I learned the history behind IWD, which was truly impactful."
- ▲ **Aynish Ijaz** reflected, "Today's celebration highlighted women's achievements and struggles. The stories shared by women and girls motivated and empowered us. I feel compelled to contribute by spreading awareness about women's issues and solutions for an equal future."
- ▲ **Muqadas Afzal** reflected, "The seminar was an educative experience. I learned about my rights and how to assert them. It also introduced me to the history and significance of 16 Days of Activism, empowering me to combat harassment."
- ▲ Participant **Zahida** shared, "I've worked independently for 16 years. In my opinion, men and women differ physically, but women can achieve just like men. I've learned to drive a tractor and bicycle to work in fields, encouraging other women to prove themselves."



**7.3 Enabled Voter Registration for 1500 Women through NIC Facilitation:** Under the Women CNIC and Voter Registration campaign in Nankana Sahib, WISE facilitated over 21,240 women in processing their CNICs and voter registrations. With support from the project 'Women's Voice and Leadership - Pakistan' backed by GAC and Oxfam, the organization sustained its efforts to stay connected with the communities in Nankana Sahib.

During this initiative, 113 community mobilization activities were conducted, engaging approximately 2189 women. Through diligent verification and data entry, 1500 unregistered women successfully processed their CNICs and registered to vote. This crucial step has empowered them as legal citizens of Pakistan, enabling access to government services and entitling them to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming elections. This will lead to reduce the male female voter deficit in Nankana Sahib.

Simultaneously, the organization pursued its advocacy campaign through Media Forums and stakeholder consultations focusing on 'Reducing the Gender Gap in Electoral Rolls: Challenges & Proposals'. Notable representatives from NADRA, ECP, PCSW, civil society, academia, media, women councilors, and parliamentarians actively participated in these sessions. The discussions centered on expediting Women CNIC and Voter registration processes to mitigate the gender disparity in electoral rolls. The collective goal was to empower women for a more active and influential participation in Pakistan's political landscape.

## Reflections:

- ▲ "I get to know the exact issue, women facing in acquiring NIC. NADRA should increase the number of mobile vans, and sensitize their field staff, so that no woman remained deprived from her identity. To gather the all stakeholders, government officials, parliamentarians, civil society, women councilors, and community women is an appreciable step by WISE and Oxfam in Pakistan. This strengthens the relationship and smooth joint working", expressed, **Uzma Kardar**, parliamentarian.
- ▲ "Ensuring inclusivity for transgender individuals in discussions with government bodies like NADRA and ECP is essential. WISE's interactive session addressed crucial nationality issues faced by transgender individuals, highlighting the importance of recognizing their rights.", expresses **Diya** from the transgender community.
- ▲ "Thanks for inviting the trans community in this consultation regarding covering the gender gap in electoral rolls. This was healthy and inclusive discussion", says, **Heer Alvi** (trans woman).



**7.4 Empowered 50 Young Feminists through 4-Day Gender Just School:** Keeping in mind capacity enhancement of young girls the organization conducted a transformative four-day Gender Just School, gathering 50 young feminists from Lahore, Sheikhpura, and Nankana Sahib districts. Discussions delved into breaking myths on patriarchy, gender equality, climate justice, and more. The participants gained awareness about self-identity, societal stereotypes, gender equality needs, pro-women legislation, and safeguarding measures. They explored gender relations, body and sexuality, feminist theories, successful movements, digital empowerment, and political participation's challenges for women. The school employed diverse methodologies like discussions, lectures, group work, and stress management exercises, boosting critical thinking and inter-participant relationships.



### Reflections:

- ▲ "Before, I was oblivious to the true essence of feminism. Media often portrayed it negatively. However, after participating in the Four Days Feminist and Gender Just School, I understood the inclusivity of feminism, embracing all genders and environmental aspects. This platform by WISE and Oxfam truly showcases young women's leadership where we all speak and take the lead," shared **Samreen Fatima**, a participant.
- ▲ "I acquired a conceptual understanding of gender discrimination, sexual harassment laws, and engaged in a new learning experience through Gender Analysis exercises," shared **Kiran Jameel**, a participant.
- ▲ "The knowledge about women's safety apps, feminist principles, and digital skills surprised me. This school opened new avenues for online work," highlighted **Ayesha Afzal**, a participant.



**7.5 Strengthened Advocacy through Documentation of Violence against Domestic Workers:** During the project period, supported by Oxfam and GAC, WISE diligently monitored and documented 74 instances of violence against domestic workers in Punjab. This data compilation is a crucial element in organizational ongoing advocacy efforts concerning domestic workers' rights, enabling the creation of strong advocacy strategies to combat such incidents. The organization prepared a comprehensive report based on the analysis of violence against domestic workers, designed and printed for dissemination. These findings will significantly contribute to gender-focused advocacy, empowering transformative gender justice programming and advocacy efforts.



**7.6 Empowered Communities by connecting 275 Women through Aurat Akaths:** Aurat Akath, known as the Women Reflect Centers, stands as an impactful network of empowered women and young girls across Lahore, Sheikhupura, and Nankana Sahib in Pakistan. Comprising 275 members spread over 10 areas, this collective aims to instill awareness of pro-women laws, equip individuals with skills to combat gender-based violence, and foster gender equality within their communities. Their rigorous efforts involve sensitization sessions, grassroots engagement, and skill-building initiatives, all geared towards empowering women.

Starting in September 2022 and concluding in December 2023, Aurat Akath embarked on a series of activities. These included the formation of district-level structures, development of manuals, comprehensive training workshops for focal persons, regular meetings, planning sessions, and an annual review.

The tireless efforts of Aurat Akath have yielded tangible results, with their district-level structures becoming instrumental in addressing instances of violence against women, fostering community support, and engaging with authorities for systemic change. By establishing a network that promotes women's rights and empowers local communities, Aurat Akath progressively advanced toward its goal of gender equality and a safer environment for women and girls within their communities.

#### Reflections:

- ▲ "A woman's socio-economic background often fuels gender inequalities. Many remain silent not out of acceptance, but due to a lack of support. Aurat Akath aims to change these perceptions," emphasized **Azra Parveen**.
- ▲ "Our collective efforts have empowered women and girls, arming them with skills to combat gender-based violence," affirmed **Kalsoom**, another Focal Person of Aurat Akath, emphasizing the impact of their initiatives.
- ▲ "Aurat Akath is transformative; it's a collective effort dedicated to promoting gender equality within our communities," shared **Nazia Maryam**, a member of Aurat Akath, highlighting the group's commitment to fostering equality.
- ▲ "Aurat Akath presented a golden opportunity for me to advocate for women's rights and enhance my leadership skills within the community," emphasized **Nabeela Bano**, highlighting the platform's role in fostering leadership.
- ▲ "Aurat Akath stands as a beacon of hope, uniting and upholding women's rights," stated **Nasreen Akthar**, a Focal Person of Aurat Akath, underlining the group's foundational values.

**7.7 Amplified Voices via Youth-Led Virtual Cafés for Advancing Women's Rights:** The organization has been regularly hosting virtual cafes on its Facebook page to mark national and international days, address emerging women's issues, and discuss the latest advancements in promoting women's rights. These sessions featured young emerging moderators and keynote speakers addressing pertinent topics. WISE's Community Focal Persons and beneficiaries, including Women Domestic Workers, Lady Health Workers, Women Political Activists, Volunteers, and young staff members, actively participate as guest speakers and moderators. They contribute insights not only during these observances but also across various emerging women's issues all year round. This also increased their confidence in using online platforms to raise their voices.

The organizational dedication to hosting virtual cafes has led to important conversations on critical topics. These talks haven't just raised awareness but also empowered people from different sectors, like Women Domestic Workers, Lady Health Workers, and Women Political Activists, and among others in the community. These interactive sessions have made a real difference, helping create a more knowledgeable and empowered community.

The virtual cafes serve as a platform to unite young girls digitally, encouraging discussions on women's rights in Pakistan. The initiative has transformed young female staff into confident live show hosts and familiarized them with digital media. These virtual gatherings encourage the exchange of knowledge and success stories among young girls, fostering improved communication skills and a deeper understanding of women's rights.

#### Reflections:

- ▲ "Moderating a live program on International Democracy Day was my first experience on Zoom. Initially nervous, it turned into a confidence booster. Learning to ask clear questions and engage with senior Women Right Activists was quite informative." - **Hijab Fayyaz**
- ▲ "The Virtual Café is timely; it holds the power to transform society. Majority of women and girls are unaware of their rights; this platform is crucial for empowering them," expressed **Aqsa Mushtaq**.
- ▲ "I've learned that resources exist globally to aid victims of abuse; all it takes is the courage to speak up for immediate justice. Though not an expert, this online session has shed light on the available support." - **Eisha Rasheed**



**7.8 Empowered Public Space Reclamation & Inspiring Females through 'Girls on Wheels':** WISE launched the 'Girls on Wheels' initiative to empower young girls in Lahore, Sheikhpura, and Nankana Sahib by facilitating training in bike riding and providing them with scooters. The primary objective was to enable these girls to reclaim public spaces, especially those from distant communities, breaking societal taboos and fostering independent mobility.

These trained young girls experienced newfound freedom and independent mobility, contributing significantly to their confidence and the encouragement of other women in their communities. Additionally, organization's initiative received positive recognition from government officials and community members, earning praise for its efforts in empowering women and ensuring their safety.



Moreover, these scooty riders participated in a Women Cyclothon organized by the Punjab government and civil society groups, showcasing their newfound skills and inspiring others. Ms. Uzma Kardar, Chairperson of the Gender Mainstreaming Standing Committee, appreciated WISE's initiative and advocated for its expansion. The collaborative efforts resulted in the government's announcement of a Women Cyclothon, witnessing over a hundred women riding cycles, scooters, and bikes on the streets of Lahore on International Women's Day. This marked a significant milestone in organizational journey toward gender equality and women's empowerment.



### Reflections:

- ▲ "I reside in a backward community, but now I ride a bike. My father is happy and even extends help to park the bike. During training, despite mockery due to my weight, I quickly learned to balance on both a cycle and a bike. Mobility is now safe for me," shared **Amina Afzal**.
- ▲ "Riding a scooty was my dream, and today, with WISE's support, it has been fulfilled. Thank you. I remember when I first expressed this desire; many in my community were surprised. They often said girls shouldn't ride scootees, it's not for them. But WISE believed in me, providing encouragement and the resources needed to learn. Now, I'm not just riding a scooty; I'm breaking stereotypes and encouraging other girls in my community to chase their dreams," expressed **Fizza Chauhdry**.
- ▲ "During my training, people teased me, saying the bike was too heavy for me to handle. But I learned quickly, and now I ride a motorbike confidently on the streets of Shahdara," expressed **Rabia Shaukat**.
- ▲ "I am the first post-graduate in my village in Nankana Sahib and also an admin at WISE. During my training, my supervisor discouraged me a lot and made fun of my efforts to balance on a bicycle. Despite this, I remained determined and with tireless effort, I finally achieved it. Now, I can confidently ride a scooty," shared **Kalsoom Aktar**.



**7.9 Nurtured & Transformed Young Female Leadership through GLP for Lasting Impact:** Under Gender Leadership Program (GLP), Oxfam in Pakistan (OiP) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) aim to engage potential women leaders of WROs partners and nurture their leadership skills following feminist principles and assess its impact on transforming organizational programs and processes. In order to ensure the core thrust of enhancing the women leadership within the WROs, WVLP contextualized the rich content available under the GLP for roll out in Pakistan. The refinement of the content was done to ensure personal, collective, and institutional gender just organizations, while providing an opportunity to the project to identify potential women leaders as change agents. Under the project, GLP was not only launched with these potential women leaders but its impact on their self-transformation as well as their work within their organizations was also regularly assessed. These women were selected during roll-out of Capacity Assessment Tool for Gender Just Organizations (CAT4GJO) and belong to a diverse group of families, geographical regions and management hierarchies. Some of these women belong to the governance bodies as well as program management structures and have long lasting association with the WROs.

From WISE, **Ms. Najma Nazir (Finance Manager), Ms. Fizza Choudhary (MEAL Officer), Ms. Amina Afzal and Ms. Asma Aamir (Project Managers)**, successfully completed the comprehensive three-week Gender and Leadership Program (GLP). Each module spanned a week, and following each module, every GLPier undertook practical projects. These projects focused on 'psycho-social wellbeing and stress management' for WISE staff and young girls. Additionally, they worked on initiatives promoting 'Inclusiveness of differently abled women' by aiding them in obtaining CNICs and Disability Cards. They also addressed the psycho-social well-being of widows and supported women vendors by facilitating their registration with FBR. These projects were executed with remarkable dedication and enthusiasm.

GLPier's training experience has influenced program design, execution, and ideation, augmenting organizational effectiveness. This opportunity not only uncovered their hidden potentials but also cultivated their skills and innovation, ultimately benefiting the organization.

The GLP experience enriched their knowledge base, productivity, and confidence, enabling their active participation as a resource person in the organizational events. These Piers are now invaluable resources for the organization, offering rich insights and strategies

for social change and women's development. Additionally, two GLPiers, Najma Nazir and Amina Afzal, gained international exposure during events like the World March of Women's Asian Regional Meeting and the 'Women at Work' conference in Nepal. They actively engaged in event organization and conducted sessions, leveraging their GLP learning.

Three GLPiers, Asma, Amina, and Najma participated in the 13th WMW International Meeting held in Ankara. Gathering 160 delegates from 60 countries, the 5-day event served as a platform for global engagement. Their fortified skills from the GLP enabled their participation, allowing them to actively engage in discussions, share valuable experiences, and and learning from diverse perspectives across countries.

The transformative journey of GLPiers is remarkable. Previously hesitant in public speaking, Najma recently led a residential training workshop for female journalists, delivering an in-depth session on identity and power dynamics. Conversely, Amina, despite her youth, displayed a swift learning curve. Additionally, Asma's selection as a substitute member of the international council for the World March of Women in the Asian seat for the next three years highlights the recognition of their capabilities on a global scale. Their growth showcases the profound impact of the GLP on their confidence, skills, and initiative-taking abilities.

Moreover, the Gender and Leadership Program (GLP) was replicated with 23 young girls, amplifying the transformative influence of this initiative. The replication of GLP reflects a commitment to cultivating young leadership and fostering a sense of empowerment and self-transformation among young women.

**7.10 Promoted Women's Right Awareness through Development of IEC Material: Documented a Decade Journey:** WISE celebrated its 10th anniversary by showcasing its achievements with a range of visibility materials including brochures, thematic posters, documented success stories and a video highlighting accomplishment, and testimonials, reflecting organizational journey and impact over the past decade. Giveaways like shirts, key chains, and mugs were also produced and distributed to mark the milestone.

**Developed Promotional Material on Safeguarding:** organization developed various promotional materials during the reporting period to raise awareness and empower communities. This included flyers, mugs, key chains, and phone holders carrying powerful messages on workplace dignity and zero tolerance for harassment. 500 water bottles designed to promote safeguarding and gender equality also raise awareness about the environment. Decorated with impactful messages, they remind us of the importance of women's safety and gender equality.





### Produced Promotional Material on Women Political Participation:

Promotional materials like flyers, mugs, and key chains were created to promote women's political empowerment and emphasize the significance of women's CNIC and voter registration. These materials were designed for distribution among stakeholders and targeted specifically at women without CNICs.

**Bookmarks on Feminist Principles:** The organization dedicatedly designed and crafted 5,000 bookmarks, each highlighting a distinct feminist principle, with 500 copies dedicated to each principle. These bookmarks are instrumental in spreading awareness and knowledge about feminist values among the project's direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Stallers - Aurat Akath: 300 stallers were designed and printed for the members of Aurat Akaths. These stallers not only symbolize empowerment but also boost Aurat Akath's visibility within communities.

Moreover, WISE undertook diverse initiatives, crafting publications and giveaways such as eco-feminist water bottles to promote environmental consciousness. The organization conducted research on unpaid care work involving 200 women domestic workers and published books on Aurat Akath (Women Reflect Centers). WISE documented its work in implementing Anti-Sexual Harassment Laws and Safeguarding in Pakistan through the publication "Sexual Harassment at Workplace: Understand, Prevent, and Respond". Transformative stories of young girls found a voice in the booklet "A Compendium of Case Studies". The "Feminist Symphony" booklet creatively captured grassroots women's expressions through poetry, songs, and tappay, promoting women's rights. Furthermore, WISE documented WVL's four-year transformative journey towards Gender Just Organization in a dedicated booklet and flyer.



### 7.11 Supported 280 Household of Frontline Women Workers during COVID-19 with Hygiene Kits:

Equity-Based COVID Response focused on aiding vulnerable households, focusing on women domestic workers, lady health workers, and sanitary workers, reaching 280 households and benefiting 498 women, 417 men, and 729. With a grassroots approach and community ties, volunteers identified and supported the most vulnerable. The distribution of hygiene kits, including masks, sanitizers, Dettol liquid, soaps, and sanitary pads, aimed to safeguard these frontline workers often overlooked in relief efforts. Awareness sessions were conducted to educate and raise awareness among both the workers and the broader community. A total distribution of 10,560 masks, 578 sanitizers, 1680 soaps, 560 Dettol Liquid Bottles, and 560 packs of sanitary pads was carried out.

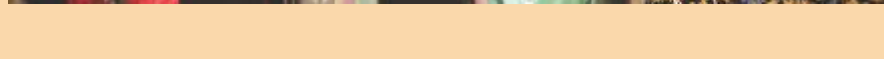
### Reflections:

- “The hygiene items helped her and many other women domestic workers to resume their jobs,” shared **Humaira**, a women domestic worker from UC 229, Kotlakhpat, Lahore.
- “Usually, women domestic workers had prioritized obtaining ration/food items during COVID and were initially disinterested in Hygiene Items. However, after attending the awareness session on COVID's SOPs and receiving hygiene items, they realized the importance of utilizing hygiene items and adhering to SOPs,” stated **Shahzia Saeed**, a Women Domestic Worker from Rewaz Garden, Lahore.



## Strengthened Networking

**8.1 FEM Consortia Launch:** FEM Consortia, a sustainability model under the 'Women's Voice and Leadership Pakistan' project by Oxfam, was launched as a joint initiative by 12 partner Women Rights Organizations (WROs) and 5 alliances representing the 4 provinces and the ICT in Pakistan. Led by Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE) and SHADE, the formation and launch of the FEM Consortia across Pakistan signify a significant stride toward gender equality and women's empowerment. This collective effort involved various initiatives like establishing a Facebook page, G Mail, WhatsApp Group, creating an introductory brochure, and proposing impactful projects such as 'Promoting Recognition of Unpaid Care Work (PEHCHAAN).' The organization actively coordinated with the 12 women's rights organizations and 5 alliances, culminating in a successful joint launch event that amplifies voices advocating for gender equality across Pakistan.



### 8.3 Pakistani Men Against Rape (PMAR):

WISE has cultivated a strong relationship with Pakistani Men Against Rape (PMAR), collaborating on initiatives addressing crimes against women and promoting media ethics. PMAR led a session with PFUJ, encouraging diverse and non-stereotypical portrayal of women and men in media to support gender equality. Recommendations were made for journalists to highlight crimes against women, foster positive public opinion, and ensure fair representation of women journalists in media structures. PMAR also organized sessions engaging male journalists, emphasizing the need for sexual harassment committees and code of conduct display within media houses, union offices, and press clubs, aligning with the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act.



### 8.4 Mumkin Alliance Punjab:

The organization significantly contributed to the Mumkin Alliance Punjab by actively advocating for various crucial initiatives such as legislative reforms including Punjab Local Government Act 2019, combating early child marriages, and advancing the women's rights agenda and framework. Additionally, the organization conducted an orientation session for the Mumkin Alliance Punjab members on Feminist Principles, apprising them with the essential tenets for gender-just organizations.





**8.5 Increased Global Networking:** The organization expanded networking in movement building created impactful collaborations with global networks, movements, and alliances, amplifying its influence on global women and labor issues. Recently, WISE became a part of the global alliance 'SoliResp' at the annual meeting in Brazil through its affiliation with the World March of Women Pakistan. Additionally, the organization joined the World Social Forum at the Asia Level, leveraging these partnerships to extend its outreach and advocate for international solidarity and women's empowerment to a broader audience.



**8.6 Membership of Gender & Disability Electoral Working Group of ECP and Shah Regional Hussain Network:** The organization received membership in the Gender and Disability Electoral Working Group of the Election Commission of Pakistan, advancing its goals for democracy, women's inclusion, and youth participation in politics. Additionally, organization joined the Shah Regional Hussain Network under FAFEN, further reinforcing democratic efforts.

**8.7 Acknowledgement by Ombudsperson Punjab:** Organization received recognition from the Women Ombudsperson Punjab for their efforts against workplace harassment. On International Women's Day 2023, the award honored WISE and its Executive Director, Bushra Khaliq, acknowledging their advocacy and awareness work in promoting dignified workplaces. This recognition strengthens organization's ties with the Women Ombudsperson Punjab, highlighting their commitment to gender equality and conducive work environment for women.

**8.8 Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW):** The organization collaborated with PCSW to organize a seminar on the Role of Help Lines in Handling Violence against Women Incidents, enhancing awareness about helpline services, cyber harassment reporting mechanisms, and secure social media usage.

**8.9 Punjab Women Protection Authority:** Meetings with the Chairperson resulted in proposed amendments to The Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act 2016, advocating for the upgradation of Benazir crisis centers to better aid women facing violence.

**8.10 Punjab Safe City Authority:** Post-Minar-e-Pakistan incident of woman harassment, WISE actively participated in sessions organized by the Punjab Safe City Authority for the launch of the Women Safety App, conducting subsequent workshops to familiarize women with the app's emergency use.

**8.11 Police:** WISE has significantly strengthened its connections with the Lahore Police, forging a collaborative effort to ensure the safeguarding and conducive work environment for policewomen.

**8.12 Labour and Human Resource Department, Punjab:** Discussions with the Director General were aimed at securing social security cards for women domestic workers, addressing their socio-economic welfare.



**8.13 Punjab Employees Social Security Institution (PESSI):** Through regular engagements and meetings, the organization sought support from PESSI for providing social security cards to women domestic workers.

**8.14 National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA):** Collaborating with NADRA, the organization facilitated women in obtaining National Identity Cards (NICs), enabling them to exercise suffrage rights, participate in elections, claim inheritance, and access government schemes.

**8.15 Punjab Union of Journalists:** The organization actively participated in a PUJ-organized event, standing in solidarity with journalists and advocating against state censorship, emphasizing freedom of expression.

**8.16 Women Parliamentarians:** The organization remained engaged through out the period with female parliamentarians, advocating for increased women's representation in local government structures under the Punjab Local Government Act 2021.

**8.17 Educational Institutions:** Collaborating closely with educational institutions like Lahore College for Women University, Home Economics University, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), University of the Punjab, and others, the organization extended internship opportunities to students. This engagement provided them with invaluable hands-on experience within the organization, fostering a deeper comprehension of women's rights at the grassroots level. Through joint events and initiatives, the organization aimed to sensitize and empower young girl, enabling them to actively engage and learn about women's rights.

The collaboration between WISE, the Political Science Department at the University of Punjab, and various civil society organizations marks a significant step in academic innovation and civic engagement through the launch of the Post Graduate Diploma in Local Self-Government. This year, university launched the 2nd batch, which represents a collaborative initiative aiming to integrate the study of local governance into educational structures. This diploma course will serve as a platform for students, providing them with a structured curriculum that explores the dynamics of local governance. This program offers students an opportunity to learn about local governance, empowering them to become active citizens and engage in civic responsibilities.



## Project's Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact Measurement (REESI)

The "Women's Voice and Leadership - Pakistan" project signifies a transformational path in establishing a gender-equitable organization, aspiring towards enduring gender responsive policies & procedures, and sustainability. Here, a detailed evaluation examines its Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and Impact Measurement (REESI):

**Relevance:** The institutional strengthening initiatives undertaken by WISE strongly align with its objectives of promoting gender justice and empowering women. Achieving certifications, upgrading policies, and fostering a gender-equitable environment directly resonate with the organizational goals. The organization's effective advocacy strategies have garnered collaboration with stakeholders, showcasing sustained engagement.

The Core Program's emphasis on training, awareness sessions, and community-driven initiatives to boost women's rights directly addresses gender-based violence (GBV), advocates for women's political participation, and empowers women and girls.

**Effectiveness:** The Institutional Strengthening efforts showcased remarkable effectiveness by implementing a robust framework, acquiring certifications from Government Department, and fostering a gender-responsive work environment. This has significantly contributed to WISE's transformation into a gender-just organization.

The Core Program's impact is evident through the wide range of activities undertaken, including training sessions, facilitation of NICs and voter registrations, awareness programs, documentation of incidents of violence against domestic workers, grassroots connections through Aurat Akaths, and initiatives for gender equity during the COVID-19 response. Collaboration with government entities has been acknowledged, confirming the project's effectiveness in instigating change.

**Efficiency:** Efficiency in Institutional Building is evident through strategic upgrades, resource mobilization, and the enhancement of gender-responsive policies, fostering a more streamlined organizational structure.

Simultaneously, the Core Program has demonstrated efficiency by conducting a wide array of impactful activities, effectively utilizing resources for training, awareness campaigns, and empowering women and girls. Its advocacy strategies, stakeholder collaborations, and proactive engagement with media outlets showcase resourcefulness and proactivity. Regular evaluation and adaptability have ensured activities align with project goals, optimizing available resources.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability is upheld through Institutional Building's focus on internal systems, policies, staff self and collective care, resource mobilization, and enhanced networking, fostering an inclusive, supportive and resilient workplace. Similarly, the Core Program's initiatives like creating women-friendly spaces, empowering young leaders, Girls on Wheel, connecting women through

locally established Aurat Akaths (Women Reflect Centers) and ongoing awareness programs contribute to long-term sustainability by promoting gender equality and empowering community women and girls.

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The project's efforts in empowering women and young girls, nurturing leadership, and building networks ensure a lasting legacy beyond the project's duration. Emphasis on human capital development, establishing connections with national and international organizations and networks, and promoting community ownership ensures sustained impact in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

**Impact Measurement:** The Institutional Strengthening's impact is profound, evident in the organizational transformation, policy upgrades, staff self and collective initiatives, and the cultivation of a gender-responsive workplace. Additionally, the program's effect on transforming young female leadership serves as a benchmark for future growth and sustainability.

The Core Program's impact reflects in the extensive reach among women and girls through training, facilitation, and awareness sessions, showcasing tangible influence at the grassroots level. The WVL project has prompted discernible socio-economic changes, evident through participant testimonials and observed behavioral shifts. Increased awareness, enhanced self-confidence, and a sense of agency among women and young girls stand out as visible outcomes of the project's impact.