

# Media Update

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## UNIC

Press Release

### Pakistani and Afghan documentary makers join hands to promote human rights

KARACHI: Pakistani and Afghan documentary makers presented their joint audio and video productions on human rights issues at the Centre for Excellence in Journalism, Karachi, on Friday. These documentaries were produced in a first-of-its-kind residential training programme that brought together documentary makers from Pakistan and Afghanistan in Karachi from 17-28 July 2017. The training was led by award-winning journalists from Serbia, Sonja Ristic and Zoran Čulafić.

Foundation Hironnelle, the Centre for Excellence in Journalism, International Film Festival and Forum of Human Rights and the United Nation Information Centre jointly organized the training on 'Documentary Making for Human Rights and Peacebuilding', which was funded by the Embassy of Switzerland in Pakistan. Documentaries produced in the training would be broadcasted on radio and screened at film festivals across the world.

"Bringing different people together is always a fascinating idea. You get different perspectives, skill sets and different ways of thinking," Mohammad Behroozian from Afghanistan said, adding that, "It is even more important when the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan come together. The people-to-people diplomacy will, hopefully, result in better relations between the people of the two countries."

"There is a wide gap between the journalists of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Trainings such as these definitely help build better understanding among professionals and improve the prospects of peace, because these people have the power to build public opinion," said Said Nazir, a Pakistani participant.

"It was not an easy decision to come to Pakistan because the media shows only problems. There are more similarities between the two cultures than differences. I found Pakistan like my own home," said Tamana Ayazi, a participant from Afghanistan.

Kanzul Fatima Arif (Pakistan), Gulzar Nayani (Pakistan) and Tamana Ayazi's (Afghanistan) film 'Behaali' or 'Recovery' is a journey into the lives of two children Mohammad Ramzan and Shakeel, who are recovering drug addicts but do not let their history of addiction define them.

At the centre of Nameera Ahmad (Pakistan), Mohammad Behroozian (Afghanistan) and Najiba Noori's (Afghanistan) film 'Sound of Silence' is a 15-year-old girl Fariah, who was born deaf. Through Fariah's story, the film explores the challenges faced by deaf people in Karachi and how they deal with them. Radio journalist Said Nazir (Pakistan) produced an audio documentary on the challenges and success stories of transgender people in mainstream professions. Sadeq Naseri (Afghanistan) produced an audio documentary on child labour in Karachi.

Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan Marc P George, Director UN Information Centre Vittorio Cammarota, diplomats as well as the characters of the documentaries were present on the occasion. A day earlier, the Swiss Consul General Philippe Crevoisier hosted the closing ceremony of this training at his residence, which was also attended by filmmakers and film enthusiasts.

In his comments **Marc P. George, Ambassador of Switzerland in Pakistan said:** "The Swiss government is proud to offer this unique opportunity to enhance dialogue and professional relations between young Pakistani and Afghan documentary makers by developing common projects with the support of professionals."

**Vittorio Cammarota, Director UN Information Centre said:** "This training programme reflects the three pillars of the United Nations: human rights, peace and security, and socio-economic development. We brought filmmakers from Afghanistan and Pakistan to work on documentaries on human rights with a focus on children and minorities. This training programme was a concrete exercise of peacebuilding and a great opportunity for promoting freedom of expression."

**Kamal Siddiqi, Director Centre for Excellence in Journalism said:** “We are happy to host such an exercise. It is our aim to make CEJ a regional Centre for excellence in Journalism and we are excited at the prospect of having journalists from Afghanistan and Pakistan come together and collaborate in this manner at our state-of-the-art facilities. Such an initiative will help build bridges of understanding between our two countries and we hope to conduct more such exercises in the future too.”

**Caroline Vuillemin, CEO Fondation Hironnelle said:** “This training was an exciting opportunity to marry capacity building and production for the participants. The Fondation Hironnelle experts worked with a mixed team that brought new angles and rich inputs to the stories and produced unique documentaries.”

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