The successful completion of USAID Project has enabled common citizens to plan projects on priority basis in their areas and later they can monitor and track funds regarding their projects at any level. This is, in fact, a great achievement towards creating awareness about the basic rights of citizens in Pakistan.
“Sustainable development refers to the enhancement of peace, social justice, and well-being within and across the generations. Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) is engaged in producing knowledge that aims to enhance the capacity of government and communities to make informed policy decisions and to engage civil society on issues of public interest. The core objectives of the institute are being achieved by providing help to public officials and stakeholders so as to respond to the multiple challenges faced by Pakistan. Budget is an annual financial strategy of a state regarding proposed expenditures and available resources, which reflects the state policies and priorities. The quality of public service delivery is highly dependent on the budget allocations. Citizens’ participation in budget making and allowing them to track expenditures help them win confidence, promote transparency and enable them to voice their needs and preferences. In short, it can act as a catalyst for the systemic shift in domestic budgetary transparency and accountability. In pursuance of this, SDPI has recently implemented this project with the collaboration of USAID. The successful completion of this project in two districts of KPK is a great achievement and milestone for the betterment of society. This project can be considered as a pilot project and the same can be implemented in other districts”.

DR. ABID QAIYUM SULERI
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY INSTITUTE
“Exchange of views with Government officials, elected local government members and civil society on civic participation on budget making process was a good experience for me. Citizens’ participation in budget making process is a process which provides individuals an opportunity to influence public decision-making process. The roots of citizen participation can be traced back to ancient Greece and the colonial era of the British. There are so many tangible benefits that can be derived from an effective citizen participation in budget making process. Being master trainer I would like to mention that the interest, participation and cooperation of all stakeholders was very impressive in both districts. After the completion of the project, SDPI provided very good platform to all participants by establishing forums containing most suitable participants from all stakeholders who will further expand the theme of this project. Being common citizens, we should make it possible to further conduct same awareness workshops and trainings in all other districts for effective outcomes”

MR. NAVEED ALI KHAN
MASTER TRAINER

“In my opinion training on budget making and expenditure tracking was very useful, unique and important for me because after getting this training, I realized that now I'm able to perform my duties much better than before. As Member of City District Council Peshawar it’s my duty to keep check on use of public money and ensure transparency. These trainings would help me to perform my job very well”

RAZA MOHAMMED KHAN
MEMBER CITY DISTRICT COUNCIL, PESHAWAR
“This was really a great opportunity for me to attend trainings from SDPI on such an important issue. I believe budget making and expenditure tracking is very important activity at any level of government. After getting these trainings, we are now more comfortable to implement this concept in future. It is also a great pleasure for me that all the Forum members elected me as chairman of the Forum known as Citizen Rights Network, Haripur. Now we are further working that how we can ensure maximum civic participation in this very important activity and how we can create more awareness at grass roots level.”

ASIF ALI JAH
CHAIRMAN, CRN, HARIPUR, CEO BEER DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

“In my understanding and what I have been experienced throughout my career, this training is among the best one not only that SDPI had educate hundreds of participants from multi sectors and equipped them with the one the best knowledge regarding Budget making and Expenditure tracking but also motivated them to ensure Citizen participation in the Budget making process. I assume that this will be a regular training but through professional vision and selection of the topic of the training, I am certain that this training is need of the hour. It is also very important to highlight that in future the forums which were created after trainings will continue the SDPI mission in the field of Transparency and Accountability.”

SHAHID ULLAH JAN
FORUM CHAIRMAN, CRN PESHAWAR, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF PAKISTAN
In Pakistan, the major socio-economic problems are related to health, education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), infrastructure, and security. All such problems can be solved by making proper planning and budgeting of projects on priority basis. However, the projects’ sustainability related to these areas depends on proper planning, prioritization, and execution of projects. The appropriate channels that can play a vital role in this regard are community-based organizations, government officials concerned, and elected representatives belonging to these areas because only they know how to prioritize the projects in their respective areas and as a follow-up how can they closely monitor the funds’ movement and tracking. Civic participation and monitoring at grass roots level can be a milestone in reaping the maximum benefits of mega projects. No doubt, after some mega projects there will be a huge funds’ generation and revenue. So the prioritization of projects in their respective areas according to their needs can be a key factor. The departments concerned can be accountable to common people at grass roots level. The citizens’ involvement can build more confidence among the ignored majority.

Through Small Grants and Ambassador’s Fund Program (SGAFP) Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad has completed training and awareness programmes in two districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) under the title: Ensuring citizens participation and oversight in budget making process at district level in KPK. The selection of these districts was made on the basis of easy access to and availability of local government structures. Although it’s a long way to go, we can say it is the first drop of rain in desert. In this project, SDPI selected most suitable, active, and efficient participants from three sectors, i.e. government, local government representatives, and local NGOs. After the completion of this project, all the stakeholders can easily engage themselves in new projects, funds monitoring activities, and transparency in the proper usage of funds. This can reduce the chances of mismanagement and corruption. Expenditure tracking is yet another tool for all the stakeholders so that they could use it to ensure that the government budgets are being executed accordingly.

After the successful completion of as many as 8 trainings in first phase and 16 trainings in second phase in both the districts, the total number of beneficiaries is over 200. However, these trainees can further train or impart these skills among others. For that purpose and to ensure the sustainability of this project, SDPI selected 25 members from the existing trainees and established forums in both districts. The registration of these forums is done under “The Society Act of 1860”. Now, these forums are planning to further extend the same project.

The trainings and newly-established forums are the key achievements of this project. The participants can play a vital role especially the local government representatives can engage them in budget making process. They can also mobilize their communities for funds’ monitoring and tracking in their respective areas.
SDPI has completed the mapping and networking of CSOs and has selected CSOs working in the four targeted sectors. The district government has also been requested to recommend most suitable persons, including district council members and government officials, for the training.

In first phase, a total of eight training workshops four each in both districts, had to be conducted in five working days. During this phase, SDPI selected most suitable participants from all three cadres, i.e CSOs, district council members and government officials whereas elected members were recommended by district Nazim and Naib Nazim and government officials were recommended and approved by DCO offices. Daily attendance sheets, pre & post session tests, pictures, group discussions and presentations were also the main activities of these workshops. For evaluation and further improvement, SDPI collected data and feedback from all participants by providing them an especially tailored questionnaire at the end of every workshop. The total number of participants who successfully completed the first phase was 176. USAID’s monitoring team visited all the workshops on regular basis and appreciated all arrangements and successful commencement of the events. DCO, ADC, City Nazims and Naib Nazims also occasionally visited these workshops on SDPI invitations.
The second phase was more technical and practical. In this phase, 16 workshops were conducted eight each in both the districts. The total number of beneficiaries in this phase was 176. SDPI arranged SAP access and provided laptops for learning and practice purposes under the supervision of skilled and professional trainers. The second phase was very practical and to provide maximum time and equal learning opportunity to all participants, SDPI increased the number of training workshops and reduced the participants. Daily attendance sheets, pre & post session tests, pictures, group discussions, presentations and end of workshop evaluation form were the main activities of these workshops. USAID’s monitoring team regularly visited the workshops. They checked the standard of training and provided facilities and appreciated all arrangements and successful commencement of the events.

Establishment of Forums:

After the successful completion of trainings in both the cities, SDPI established two forums comprising 25 members each, (i.e. five elected members, five government officials, and 15 CSOs. All of them were selected on the basis of their interest, performance, participation and active role in the city. They elected Board of Directors and executive body through voting and agreed to run the forum on voluntary basis. The registration process of these forums had already been completed under the Society Act of 1860.

Seminar on Accountability through empowerment in Peshawar:

On January 12, 2017, SDPI organized a seminar on ‘Accountability through Empowerment’ in Peshawar. In this seminar, all the project participants were invited. The chief guest of the seminar was City Naib Nazim. Special lecture was delivered on subject. A video package was also produced with the participants’ input and the interview of chief guest. The event received a lot of media coverage in local and national newspapers. News clippings are available.
As per the agreed plan, SDPI conducted four quarterly meetings in both the districts, finalized all the formalities, and prepared an action plan that how these forums can be used to get maximum benefits from the trainings imparted by SDPI. And how a forum can mobilize citizens to ensure their participation in the budget making and expenditure tracking. SDPI conducted four quarterly meetings in both districts and finalized all forum formalities and prepared action plan that how these forums can be used to get maximum benefits from trainings which SDPI provided. And how forum can mobilize citizen to ensure their participation in budget making and expenditure tracking.

**Forums quarterly:**

After conducting workshops and refresher courses in both the cities, SDPI held certificate distribution ceremonies in Peshawar and Haripur. All the participants, who successfully completed all the phases of training, were invited. The certificates were distributed by the chief guests of the events. In Peshawar, city Naib Nazim and in Haripur, city Naib Nazim and DCO Haripur distributed certificates among the participants.

**Certificate distribution ceremonies:**

After successful completion of project trainings and as per the agreed schedule, SDPI arranged two days refresher courses and invited all participants to refresh their memories and to share their experiences about the outcomes of learnings from course work and trainings. All the participants were very energetic and excited to play active role to further implement and strengthen the project objectives.

**Refresher Courses:**

As per the agreed schedule, SDPI arranged annual forum meetings in both the cities. During these meetings, all the forum members were invited, who shared their activities and action plan for the proper implementation of the project in the long run.

**Annual Forum meetings:**

Ensuring Citizen Participation & Oversight in
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA (KP)