



SPO
Strengthening
Participatory
Organization
اداره استحکام مشارکتی

Putting People First!

30 years and counting...



Save the Children

GRASSROOTS ACTION TO END CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE (CEFM)



بچپن اور کم عمری کی شادی ظلم بھی ہے اور جرم بھی

Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO)

Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) is a rights and responsibilities-based organization serving to improve the well-being of the communities of Pakistan by making them aware of their basic rights and ensuring access to attain those. It is registered under Section 42 of the Companies Act 2017.

SPO has evolved over the past 30 plus years since 1994 into a nationally recognized NGO, from a modest initiative in 1987, taken by the Canadian International Development Agency to transfer their Small Project Office to an entirely Pakistani-led new entity.

Since 1994 SPO has served almost 25 million people. It has implemented 449 projects with a total budget of PKR 16 billion / USD 56 million, including 70 humanitarian projects worth PKR 2.725 billion, supported by 105 financial partners. Our core thematic areas include Social and Economic Development, Climate Change Adaptation, Digital Knowledge Transformation and Cultural Heritage and Tourism Promotion. In addition, Gender and Digital Knowledge serve as cross-cutting themes.

As the organization continues to evolve, it has undergone a transformational journey from an implementing organization to one that blends both implementation and management portfolio. Historically, SPO has been working as an implementing organization by delivering projects directly. However, institutional strengthening remains a challenge for many organizations, and this is where SPO plays a critical role in bridging the gap between funders and CSOs by exhibiting its capacity to perform as an intermediary body.

SPO's dual role as an implementing and management organization is supported by strong governance, transparent financial management, operational efficiency, and a commitment to accountability.

Save the Children

Save the Children has been operational in Pakistan since 1979, delivering both humanitarian relief and long-term development programs for children and their communities. Over the past four decades, we have mobilized more than USD 900 million and reached over 14 million people, including children and Afghan refugees, through child-centered, rights-based programming.

Our portfolio spans health and nutrition, education, child protection, climate change and resilience, food security and livelihoods, WASH, and humanitarian response. With a legally registered presence, a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Interior, and a strong network of local civil society partners, we combine global expertise with deep-rooted local partnerships to deliver impactful, scalable, and sustainable results. Save the Children Pakistan remains committed to ensuring that every child survives, learns, and is protected.



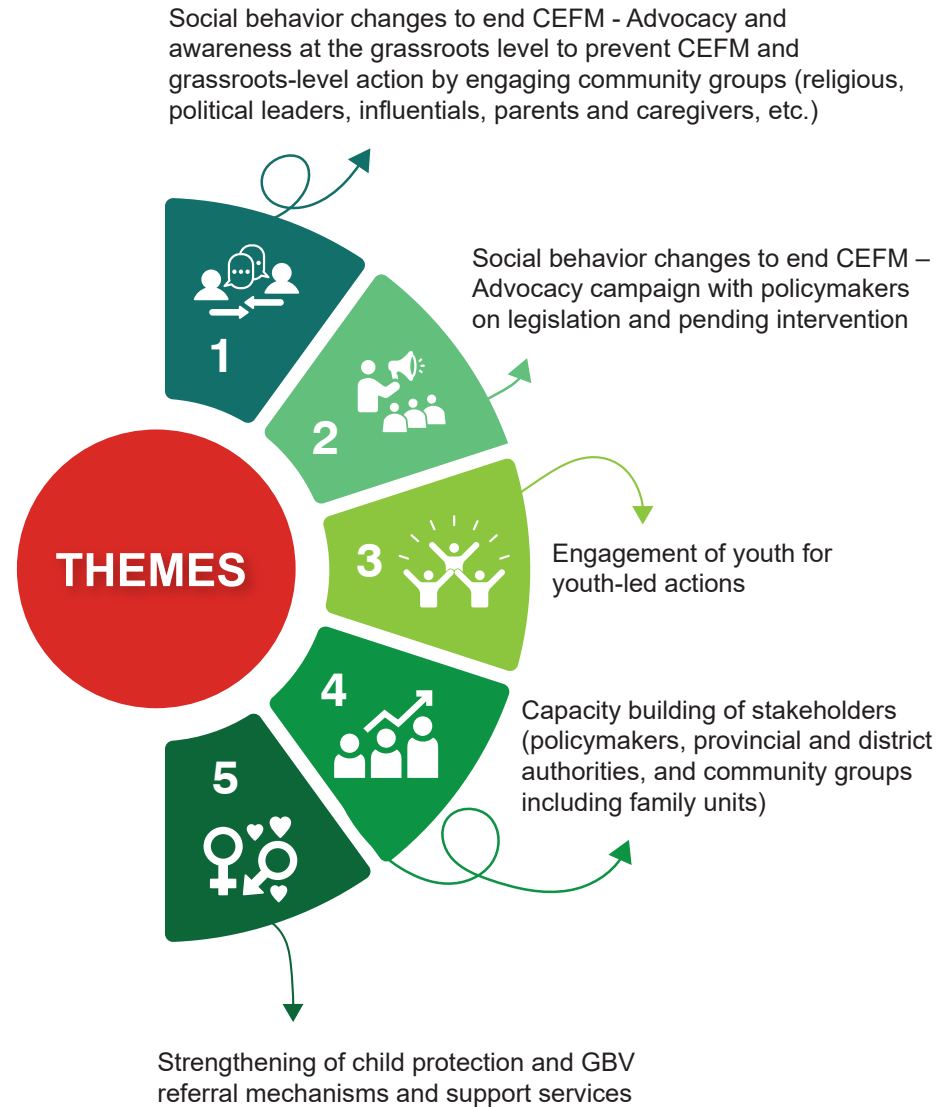
Project Title	GRASSROOTS ACTION TO END CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE (CEFM)		
Donor	U.S. Department of State	Project timeline	October 2023 to September 2025

Goal

Grassroots CSOs are supported to engage in and implement high-quality, gender-transformative programming and advocacy that contribute to a reduction in the prevalence of CEFM and increased support for women and girls who experience or are at risk of CEFM.

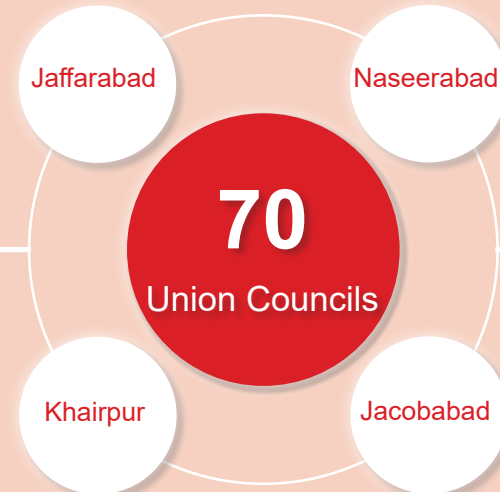
Program Objectives

- 1 Mobilize, support, and coordinate grassroots CSOs to prevent and respond to CEFM with synchronized and gender-transformative, community-based approaches.
- 2 Increase coordination among CSOs, relevant government authorities, and other key stakeholders to strengthen local leadership and implementation of gender-transformative and effective policies, programs, and advocacy to prevent and respond to CEFM.



PARTNERS SUPPORTED

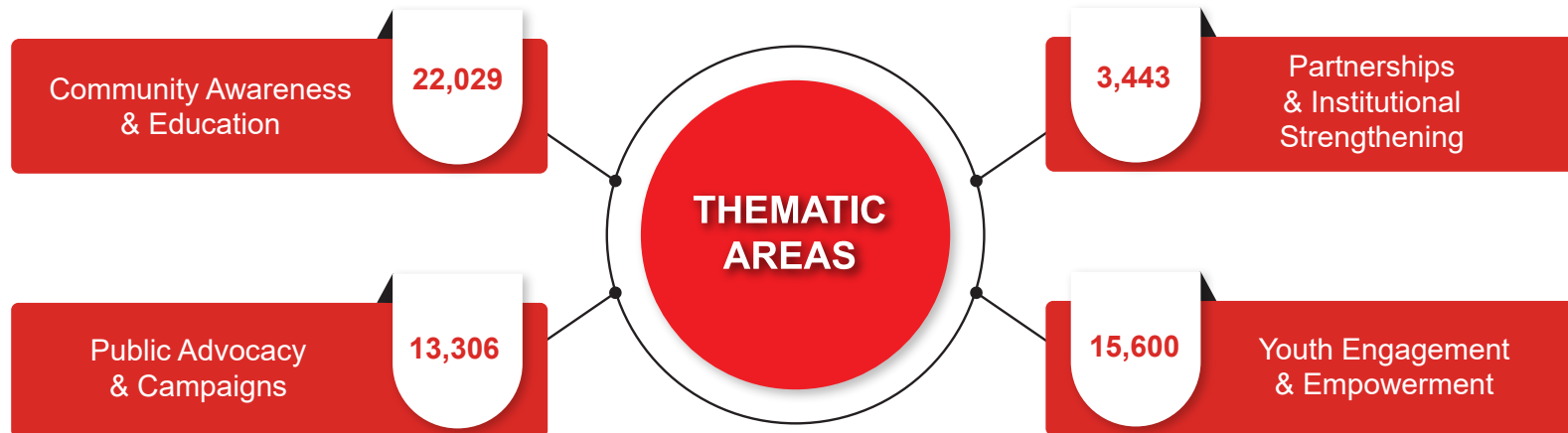
- Seher Arts for Peace
- Motto to Empower Health Education & Rights (MEHER)
- The National Educational & Environmental Development Society (NEEDS)
- Basic Initiative for Social Development (BISD)



- Women Agriculture Development Organization (WADO)
- Insan Dost Social Organization (IDSO)
- Imamia Welfare Organization (IWO)
- Sewa Development Trust Sindh (SDTS)
- Bhittai Social Watch & Advocacy (BSWA)
- Community Relief Services (CRS)
- SHIFA Welfare Association
- Peace by Youth (PY)
- Development & Empowerment Society (DES)

BALUCHISTAN

SINDH



Total 54,378 Persons Engaged



CSOs Trained

13 distinct Civil Society Organizations were trained in the project

Advocacy Campaigns Held

Over 100 advocacy campaign activities recorded across all CSOs

Outreach Sessions

Over 200 awareness sessions, workshops, trainings, and sensitization meetings were conducted

Direct Beneficiaries

Over 55,000

Youth Committees

20 Youth Committees Formed

Government Officials Engaged

About 1,731 government officials were engaged in the activities

Nikkah Registrars Trained

Approximately 299 Nikkah Khawans/Nikkah Registrars were trained

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Around 371 persons with disabilities were directly reached through various activities

Indirect Beneficiaries

Over 934,922

Community Committees

50 Community Committees Formed

Total Committees Membership

1,050 Members



Support provided by SPO as a Management Organization

Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) has played a pivotal role in supporting grassroots civil society organizations (CSOs) under the “Grassroots Action to End CEFM” project. SPO’s support has been comprehensive, focused on both organizational and technical strengthening to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of local CSOs working on child, early, and forced marriage prevention and response.

Empowered local CSOs with comprehensive capacity building and organizational strengthening

Delivered expert technical guidance to enhance community engagement and program quality

Enabled financial and administrative excellence to ensure transparency and sustainability



Fostered inclusive leadership and promoted the active participation of marginalized groups

Strengthened coordination and collaboration among networks for amplified impact

Cultivated resilience and self-reliance in grassroots organizations for lasting change



MAIN ACTIVITIES

Community Awareness & Education

- Awareness sessions with community groups (men, women, youth and parents)
- Workshops with teachers, parents, health and psychosocial practitioners
- Community-level alternate theater performances on CEFM impacts
- Sensitization sessions on birth registration, marriage registration and child rights
- Community dialogues and pledge-taking activities

Public Advocacy & Campaigns

- Advocacy mass campaigns at UC, district and provincial levels
- District and provincial level awareness events and grand advocacy campaigns
- Mobilization events involving parents, students, religious leaders and government officials
- Networking and coalition-building activities among partners
- Exposure visits and participation in provincial and district learning forums



Partnerships & Institutional Strengthening

- Training for Nikah registrars, religious leaders, legal stakeholders, and police
- Workshops with government departments (Women Development Department, Social Welfare and Child Protection Units)
- Development of referral pathways and coordination mechanisms amongst stakeholders
- Capacity building for support and response mechanisms on CEFM laws and policies
- Coordination meetings and strategy development workshops
- Policy review and recommendation workshop

Youth Engagement & Empowerment

- Identification and formation of youth committees and youth champions
- Youth networking meetings and co-creation activities
- Youth-focused strategy development workshops
- Youth-led mass advocacy campaigns and participation in dialogues with government officials
- Youth engagement in theater performances and creative advocacy methods

Networks

- The project organized dynamic District Learning Forums in the four key districts Naseerabad and Jaffarabad in Balochistan Province, and Jacobabad and Khairpur in Sindh Province. Complementing these, Provincial Learning Forums were held in Balochistan and Sindh provinces to amplify impact.
- These forums served as powerful platforms where diverse stakeholders from local government officials and community leaders to CSOs, health and education representatives, law enforcement, media, and youth/women's groups came together to share knowledge, address challenges, and form multi-sectoral action plans. With a strong focus on collaboration and contextual relevance, the forums enabled coordinated responses tailored to the unique needs of each district, while aligning with provincial policies and frameworks.
- Through engaging dialogue and strategic planning, the forums strengthened partnerships and galvanized commitment, setting the stage for impactful actions against Child Early and Forced Marriages to secure brighter futures for girls and communities in these regions.

NETWORKS

Four District Learning Forums (Khairpur, Jacobabad, Naseerabad, Jaffarabad)

Two Provincial Learning Forums (Sindh, Balochistan)



Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) and Save the Children have laid a strong foundation to combat Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) through community-centered, gender-transformative approaches. To ensure lasting impact beyond the project timeline, the focus will be on institutionalizing gains through continued capacity building of grassroots CSOs and fostering resilient local networks. Sustained advocacy and collaboration with government authorities and key stakeholders will drive policy enforcement and social norm change.

Monitoring, learning, and adaptive management mechanisms will be embedded to track progress and respond to emerging challenges. Future steps include expanding youth leadership, strengthening referral and protection systems, and mobilizing resources for long-term community empowerment, thereby securing a safer and equitable future for children and women across Pakistan.



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