

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The project 'Voices of Hope' was initiated in January 2021 after detailed meetings and discussions by our team under the guidance of our mentor. The goal of gender equality was chosen with mutual consensus as we felt that a lot of work needs to be done to create awareness in this regard. As this was a sensitive topic, we initially agreed that we will primarily reach out to the IGCSE and A level students of our school as they are better equipped to understand our perspective. We took part in many discussions and also did research on various aspects of gender equality and the causes of domestic violence in Pakistan and its underlying causes. However, the biggest setback that we have had to face in the implementation was the closure of schools during most of this period due to Covid. Many of the projects that were initially planned on campus had to be held virtually. The outcome, however was still effective as we were able to reach out to a wider audience through our online sessions. A brief overview of some of the activities that we organised within the campus are given below:

### **1. CHANGING PERSPECTIVES-EARLY YEARS**

One of our main objectives was to target young impressionable minds as well as create awareness among parents and teachers on the importance of gender equality and human rights so that domestic violence can be curbed in the future. An awareness session was conducted with the primary teachers of the school. The school counsellor guided them on how they can incorporate awareness about gender roles and equal rights in their classes. They were also guided on how they need to ensure gender neutral vocabulary in their lessons. Stories in which girls and boys are encouraged to respect and care for each other were incorporated in their daily reading lessons. An online guidance session was organised by the school counsellor for parents of primary students in which they were guided on how to make children aware of equal rights for both genders. Parents were guided on how they should supervise the screen time of their children to ensure that they are not watching violent content. The session was highly appreciated by the parents.

### **2.POSTER COMPETITION**

A poster competition was organised by our team in which students of Middle school and 'A' levels participated to create awareness about the issue of gender equality and domestic violence. Students, under the guidance of the Art teacher and our 'Voices of Hope' team made posters highlighting various aspects of the issue. The topics given to each level were:

**IGCSE and MIDDLE SCHOOL-** Equal capabilities, Equal opportunities

**A LEVELS-** Gender based violence- Raise your voice, change the perspective

Pictures of the posters were shared on our social media page.

## **2. WOMEN'S DAY**

An event was organised by the A level students of the school in collaboration with the 'Voices of Hope' team to raise awareness about Women rights on the occasion of Women's Day. Various activities were organised in an endeavour to highlight the issue of domestic violence and gender discrimination. Mothers of students and teachers were given flowers and cards as token of appreciation of their contributions. A poster competition was also organised to mark the event.

## **3. VOICES OF HOPE- INSTAGRAM PAGE**

The 'Voices of Hope' social media page created quite an impact as it was followed by students, parents and teachers as well as many others. All pictures of the various events were uploaded on the page as well as daily posts highlighting the various causes of domestic violence in our society. The research done by our team regarding this issue was also shared on the page. As a team, we plan to keep posting on this page to create awareness and help curb the menace of violence.

## **HOW THE PROJECT CHANGED OUR PERSPECTIVE:**

Engaging in this project has been an eye opening and enriching experience for us as a team. The more we discussed the issues and did research on the various aspects; we were further motivated to try and make a difference not only within our community but in society as a whole. As a team, we made a pledge to continue highlighting these issues and talking about them at every level. Due to our research and discussions, we were able to understand that these issues are faced by both women and men in all segments of society. Many of our classmates as well as students who participated in the awareness campaign showed an increased interest in gender issues. This was indeed an achievement.

Some of the segments of the project that we had initially planned could not be implemented due to the closure of schools during most of this period due to Covid, however, we are grateful to the school administration who facilitated us in arranging online discussions and sessions. We would also like to acknowledge the guidance and help of our faculty mentors without whom this project could not have been implemented.



**OUR TEAM**





