

AWAM continues work to empower women with disabilities in Pakistan

Following on from the project, 'Creating spaces for women with disabilities in South Asia', one of our associate partners – the Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AWAM), in Pakistan, is continuing work to empower and mainstream women with disabilities. AWAM organised a three-day leadership training workshop in Faisalabad, to train 30 participants (24 women and six men, both Muslim and Christian) in skills that enable women with disabilities to speak up for their rights.

“We must engage rather than isolate persons with disabilities in public life, in order to enable them lead an independent and confident life, free of barriers and discrimination,” said Naseem Anthony, Executive Secretary of AWAM and resource person for the training workshop.

The participants unanimously approved a resolution to mainstream disability and called upon the Government to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It urged the Government to take practical measures to support people with disabilities, such as speeding up the disability registration process, simplifying it and making it accessible; ensuring that all privileges, policies and legislation concerning people with disabilities are implemented properly; eliminating the tariffs, duties and taxes imposed on assistive devices and vehicles for people with disabilities; taking steps to ensure easy access to educational institutes, health facilities, rehabilitation centres, employment, transportation, public buildings and places, based on universally accepted standards for all persons with disabilities; and supporting equality for women by repealing discriminatory national laws, outlawing customary practices and informal courts, and taking punitive action against people who violate this.

“Government is failed to eliminate discriminatory laws and customary practices against women and to ban informal courts, despite her commitment to safeguard the rights of women through ratification of UN convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) by the Government of Pakistan in 1996,” said Saima Williams, co-ordinator of the National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP).