



The Afghan Studies Center (ASC), is a flagship initiative of the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), strengthening Pak-Afghan relations through innovative academic, cultural, and youth exchange programs.

## A YEAR OF NARRATIVE BUILDING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ASC has undertaken various activities, projects, and research reports to engage youth in track III diplomacy.

Here is a list and brief explanation of ASC's work:

### WORKSHOP: INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

The workshop provided Afghan refugee and Pakistani youth with practical insights into community development, focusing on social enterprises and their potential for sustainable growth and social well-being.

It also highlighted the importance of strong leadership in social innovation, highlighting the need for impactful community projects.



### PAK-AFGHAN YOUTH ROUNDTABLE:

The thought-provoking discussions covered various topics, from identifying barriers to women's education to campaigning for financial independence, laying the basis for a brighter and inclusive future in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

**PAK-AFGHAN YOUTH PEACE INITIATIVE:**

The Pak-Afghan Youth Peace Initiative successfully engaged 16 Pakistani and Afghan youth in dialogue, workshops, and cultural exchanges. The initiative focused on regional challenges, youth leadership, peacebuilding, climate resilience, and narrative building.

Phase II of the initiative involved highly successful meetings with the Special Envoy to Afghanistan, government officials from Pakistan, and US Ambassador Donald Bloom.

**HARNESSING DIGITAL INNOVATION IN PAKISTAN: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES—DIALOGUE:**

The enriching discussions explored how embracing digital innovation can drive positive change and sustainable development in Pakistan's social, economic, and institutional framework.





**ETHICAL JOURNALISM IN PAKISTAN: NAVIGATING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES—DIALOGUE:**

During the conversation, there was a strong emphasis on the vital importance of upholding integrity, accuracy, and responsibility in the field of journalism.

The discussion specifically delved into the widespread problem of Pakistan's media outlets and journalists not adhering to ethical standards. It sheds light on how these ethical lapses have



significantly impacted the quality and credibility of journalism in the country and discusses the potential wide-ranging consequences for society.

#### **CLIMATE ACTION, GENDER JUSTICE AND YOUTH: AN INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS–DIALOGUE:**

The discussion focused on the current difficulties women face due to climate change and the importance of engaging youth in developing effective solutions to support women affected by climate change.



### **BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING: CHALLENGES TO WOMEN'S AGENCY AND LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH ASIA—DIALOGUE:**

The discussion highlighted that agency is rooted in decision-making, leadership, and collective action. Achieving sustainable change requires embedding these values across institutions, promoting accountability, and engaging men as allies.

The conversation also emphasized the importance of mentorship and leadership development in preparing future generations of women leaders. Another highlight was the absence of women-centric laws in Afghanistan — the participants urged regional cooperation to increase educational and economic opportunities for Afghan girls and women.



### **CHINA, AFGHANISTAN, AND PAKISTAN: CONFLICT, COOPERATION OR CONFUSION? -FGD:**

The roundtable highlighted the potential for collaboration among China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, but also emphasized the significant challenges that impede meaningful progress. While shared interests in stability, economic growth, and counter-terrorism provide a foundation, the process of achieving these milestones is fraught with challenges.

Achieving genuine cooperation will require a critical examination of the region's cultural and indigenous realities and dynamics, developmental needs, and security concerns. Without



sustained, honest engagement and a willingness to confront difficult issues, the region may continue to miss opportunities, leaving the vision of peace and prosperity out of reach.



**EMPOWERING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY/AI AND MEDIA FREEDOM—ROUNDTABLE:** The conversation delved into the intersection of technology, governance, democracy, and artificial intelligence. Daniel Castro, Vice President and Director of



the Center for Data Innovation at the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, addressed the impact of AI on Global South nations. He emphasized the shared global responsibility, the role of governments, and the importance of equipping citizens with tools for critical engagement with AI.

**YOUTH ACTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER EQUALITY - WORKSHOP:**

The workshop allowed Afghan and Pakistani girls to explore the intersection of climate, gender, and youth action. Key challenges were extrapolated during the conversation and highlighted the need for practical, gender-sensitive approaches to effective climate action.





