



PAKISTAN



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EMPOWER YOUTH FOR WORK

From Dreams to Reality

CONTEXT

Pakistan is the world's sixth most densely populated country, with around 207 million people. More than 132 million people (above 60%) are aged below 29, and three-quarters live in rural areas. Women's participation in the labor force is just 18% compared to 83% men's participation. The Empower Youth for Work (EYW) program is working to ensure that by 2021, over 31,000 young people (70% female) aged 15-29 in Layyah and Jamshoro districts have a more secure future.

VISION

Through the EYW program, young people will have better economic prospects through improvements in the job market, strong support structures, and access to better capacity-building and entrepreneurial opportunities. We will strive to create an improved social and political enabling environment that encourages and recognizes

the contribution of youth to society and the economy. Together with our youth-led partner Bargad, The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) and Research and Development Foundation (RDF), our dream is to improve economic and social empowerment for young women and men living in rural climate change affected areas. We intend to create new/improved sustainable models for youth inclusion in employment, business development and agriculture.

STRATEGIES

To achieve this vision, we use a participatory, co-creation and multi-stakeholder engagement approach for the effective engagement of young people and private, public and civil society sectors. Our strategic goals are organized under three long-term objectives: (1) increasing young people's agency and skills to make them competent and able to meet market demands; (2) identifying, creating and sharing apprenticeship and internship opportunities for youth; and (3) promoting young people's role as change agents. With the support of women's organizations and like-minded groups, youth will advocate with policy makers and communities for positive shifts in harmful social norms.



Beneficiaries EYW Pakistan



KHUSHBU'S STORY: A FACE OF CHANGE

Khushbu Malla comes from a small village where women's mobility is taboo. She had to work hard to persuade her father to let her attend the EYW Innovator's training program in Jamshoro – an opportunity that would change her life forever.

The training inspired the 22-year-old to start her own handicrafts business, 'Mehak Appliqué'. The Innovation Hub gave her space to hold meetings, helped her to get a loan and connected her with other SMEs. Starting with just Rs.700, Khushbu has built a business worth Rs.300,000, which employs 25 local women. She has a Facebook page and an online store, and aims to make Mehak Appliqué an internationally recognized brand. Khushbu has opened doors for herself and others – and is a face of change for women in her community.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS - YEAR 3

In year 3, the EYW program in Pakistan reached over 11,000 people directly (57% women, 43% men). Young people were trained as leaders (Innovators) and master trainers, who then organized village-level groups and delivered trainings on GALS (Gender Action Learning System), life skills, employment, microbusiness and farming. Farming kits were distributed to 1,172 youth (80% female) to start farming and agri-businesses. Climate-resilient agri modules were developed with and for Sindh University, and EYW collaborated with the Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) and other educational and financial institutes to deliver youth technical training.

The program connected young people with opportunities and mentorship support, leading to employment and self-employment. A start-up academy was launched in both regions, where 30 innovative business ideas were incubated. Local employers committed to provide job opportunities to young women. Around 200 young people interacted directly with employers at a Youth Expo and Job Fairs. The program collaborated with various local district administrations including the Women Development and Youth Affairs

department and the police. In Sindh, youth lobbying resulted in the launch of a Youth Policy. Awareness campaigns on care work, gender-based violence and climate change reached 25,000 community members. EYW formed a District Advisory Board with representatives from media, private sector, government, academia and agriculture.

Oxfam's campaign #YouthKaGreenPakistan encouraged young people to take action for an environmentally resilient Pakistan. Over 446,000 users engaged in EYW's digital media campaign to promote International Women's Day, in which a prominent social media influencer challenged perceptions about care-work distribution. Oxfam organized youth safeguarding training for all partners.

INNOVATION AND PILOTS

The Innovation Hubs in Layyah and Jamshoro are the first of their kind in rural Pakistan, providing training, mentorship, linking, financing and marketing services. Layyah Hub is powered through 'Solar Energy System', a renewable energy model that helps offset climate change impacts. Advanced farming techniques were adopted for the first time in target areas. EYW initiated an 'e-jobs' pilot in Layyah, connecting female trainees with online

jobs and employers, and introduced youth in both districts to e-commerce to sell their products online.

CHALLENGES AND RISKS

The government imposed heightened scrutiny of NGOs/INGOs, including a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This prevents Oxfam working with any NGO that doesn't also have a MoU with the government, as is the case for all three partners. If partners don't receive an MoU, Oxfam may have to disengage with them, with huge implications for implementation. EYW continues to build its relationship with the government to avoid further obstacles. In year 3, time spent disengaging a former partner and inducting a new partner caused serious delays. Access to finance, particularly for start-ups, remained challenging. Oxfam is collaborating with financial institutes to develop a financial product/guarantee system for all SMEs, microbusinesses and start-ups. Practical steps were taken to ensure Hub sustainability by strengthening business development support to SMEs.

For more information, please visit:
www.empoweryouthforwork.org

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