



PAKISTAN



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EMPOWER YOUTH FOR WORK

Youth leading the change that they want to see

CONTEXT

Pakistan is the world's fifth most densely populated country, with over 220 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 men's participation, at 83%. 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 as a result of 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 Bedari, IBA Karachi, 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 and 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 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.



Direct beneficiaries EYW Pakistan



SHAZIA'S STORY: "LIKE A MIRACLE"

Shazia is a 29-year-old mother of three from the village of Khanot in Jamshoro, Sindh. She had always dreamed of becoming an entrepreneur but was held back by lack of education and social barriers.

Then she met Shehla, a EYW young innovator, who introduced Shazia to the program and enrolled her in a Gender Action Learning System (GALS) training course. Shazia explained that she wanted to save up and purchase a goat to start a business. Later, the group nominated her to receive a poultry kick-start package. After selling poultry for a while, Shazia had enough money to buy a goat. It has already had kids – and soon Shazia will be able to sell one of them for PKR 25,000 (150 Euro). She says:

"This project was like a miracle for me. GALS helped me to achieve my vision by analyzing the obstacles around me – and working out how to benefit from opportunities."



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS - YEAR 4

In year 4, 250 young leaders trained 4,250 young people (2,719 female, 1,531 male) on life skills, climate-resilient businesses, and the Gender Action Learning System (GALS). As a result, 228 youth (125 female, 103 male) became employed or self-employed, with an increment in women's employment of 55% as compared to 40% last year.

Young people have strengthened their agency and have organized themselves into an advisory group at the provincial level, which is being run by youth in Punjab and national-level young leaders. The young leaders are taking social actions, helping their communities and claiming civic space. In year 5, the EYW program will emphasize sustainability and will strengthen a national-level 'Young Leaders Platform', connecting this with the Innovation Hub Pakistan, after registering the Hub as a social enterprise.

As a result of the EYW program, youth have access to digital learning solutions in their homes and at the Innovation Hub, and have a pathway to secure relatively decent work online. As a next step, youth and the EYW team will take advantage of an increase in digital jobs nationally and seek to minimize

the digital jobs gap between rural and urban youth. 52 SMEs participated in the SME Development Program, part of this group were 65 youth entrepreneurs (17 female, 48 male). The program will now focus on increasing young women's inclusion and connecting them to wider markets. These SMEs will enhance the ecosystem of micro-business for youth, especially young women.

1 network of elderly women was formed at the village level in Sindh to advocate for the sharing of household care work and addressing the consequences of child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV). Around 5,000 people were reached with messages highlighting the impact of these issues on women.

During year 4, 2,268 youth (1,354 female and 914 male) took part in life skills training and GBV sessions and became 'change makers'. This means they have committed to take social action to end GBV and child marriage by raising awareness and positively influencing their families and communities. Change makers are supported to take part in activities including awareness sessions, campaigns, companies dialogue, edutainment etc.

INNOVATION

The EYW program introduced climate-friendly micro-businesses, including honeybee farming and nursery management, where young people are involved at every stage, from training to selling their products in markets. Young people are learning to engage in online jobs, and a complete digital learning platform has been developed in the local language.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges in year 4 was disengagement with one of the implementing partners due to strict government monitoring and a vigorous process of re-registration for NGOs. The EYW program responded with a 'backup' implementing partner in the shape of consultant organizations which do not have to follow the same process to gain clearance. Secondly, in the last quarter the coronavirus pandemic hit hard and put communities under lockdown, halting key activities.

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

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