



Wom(en)trepreneurs





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YES Network Pakistan


The YES Network Pakistan was established in 2002 with the vision to promote youth-led development in the country. YES has played a pioneer role in introducing and institutionalising the concepts of service learning, youth service and youth social entrepreneurship in the leading public and private institutions of Pakistan.

We design and deliver innovative and supportive youth engagement programs to demonstrate the impact of youth-led development on youth and the society. YES assists over 15,000 youth every year in starting and running community-based ventures to carry out national and local missions otherwise left without funding. We have sensitised, educated and facilitated the representatives of over 1200 educational and technical institutions to undertake organised youth engagement approaches to mainstream youth into the development process of Pakistan.

YES Network Pakistan is certified by Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy as a 'Best Practice Institution' in the year 2011.

For more information, please visit www.yesnetworkpakistan.org

About Women@trepreneurs



The British Council's Skills for Employability programme works through the themes of skills and enterprise to support the development of education strategies - ensuring young people are better prepared for the world of work, not just to support economic prosperity, but to tackle future international challenges. One part of the programme focuses on introducing young people to the concept of social entrepreneurship.

The British Council has been running the Youth Social Enterprise Award Challenge since 2009 amongst young students between the ages of 16 to 21, studying in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions across Pakistan.

The students form teams to present their ideas and 5 to 10 winning teams are provided with required funds to start their enterprise. The British Council has trained over 70,000 youth studying in over 1000 TVET institutions across Pakistan over a period of three years. At the moment 41 teams of young social entrepreneurs are being facilitated.

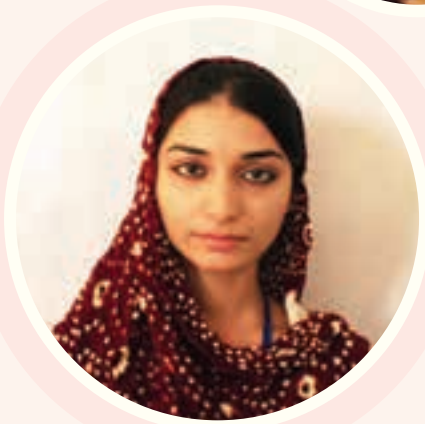
In 2011 the 'Show Your Creativity' programme was also launched for smaller social enterprise projects so that more young people get a chance to experiment with their ideas - countering underlying psychological, social and economic barriers that limit their ability to become entrepreneurs.

The British Council with the help of their partner YES Network Pakistan encouraged these students to be creative, innovative and become efficient problem solvers.

Interestingly, girls showed equal enthusiasm and interest as boys in both the programmes. In this booklet we have put together stories of such forward looking young girls who took the challenge and came up with innovative ideas to solve issues in their communities. Women@trepreneurs are empowered women who brought their ideas to fruition all while generating income for themselves as well as in some cases creating employment for other young people.

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HAFIZA SADAF ALI

A LIFE CHANGING CHANCE

Hafiza Sadaf Ali is a bright young girl of 19 who has many dreams and aspirations. She wants to study and work in a foreign country to secure a good future for herself.

However, lack of resources and direction had put her dream on hold. She heard about the workshop being held at her college through one of her training programmes, and decided to attend. It was a decision that would change Sadaf's life.

The workshop opened her mind to the idea that taking an initiative, however small, was the most important step towards prosperity and development. It taught her to believe in herself and made her realise that no dream is unachievable if a person is determined and focused.

Sadaf knew how to sew and do embroidery so she decided to make bed sheet sets and readymade clothes for women. She designed, embroidered and stitched the clothes herself and put them up for sale at a stall in her institute. Her classmates, friends and relatives were among her immediate customers. However, for her, this was more than just about money; she was able to set up her own business and learn the basics of business, marketing and public interaction, something that had seemed a dream for her before.

'My parents are quite happy with my work and I feel proud that I am able to contribute towards the expense of running the household', says Sadaf.

Sadaf is now planning to start a boutique of her own so she can have a steady means of income to support her family.

Armed with a fresh outlook on life and self-confidence, Sadaf says it's only a matter of time when she will realise her dream of going abroad.



Musarrat Khalil is a 24-year-old woman who always wanted to do something different and unique in her life. However, the community that she belonged to looked upon female participation in the business world as an unthinkable idea, so Musarrat's dream of making a mark in society was yet unfulfilled.

When she learnt about the 'Show Your Creativity' workshop being held in her area she was very eager to attend. The workshop gave her the confidence and guidance to challenge the norms of society and take a step in the world of social enterprise.

The workshop highlighted the role of women in the present world and encouraged everyone to become social entrepreneurs. Motivated by the lectures and advice, Musarrat chose to participate in the challenge and gave her idea of setting up a blood-grouping center.

She was going to arrange the donated blood into different blood groups to facilitate quick, easy and accurate use. Her project was quickly approved and she was given funds to begin her enterprise.

Musarrat's initiative was a huge success and not only did it help a number of people, it also gave her confidence a boost and enabled her to think of even bigger and better things that she could explore as options for entrepreneurship.

Her experience was a very pleasant one, and she described it as a dream come true to have owned and run her own business.



MUSARRAT
KHALIL

**BLOOD
GROUPING
PIONEER**



NAZIA PARVEEN

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

29 year-old Nazia Parveen is a student of the Vocational Training Center in Sehnsa, Kotli, Azad Kashmir. During her time at the Vocational Training Center, Nazia developed a desire to utilise her skills to help young girls and women around her.

After consulting with her teacher Madam Farzana, Nazia set about her dream by conducting stitching classes of her own for young girls. She is a firm believer in the independence and self-reliance of women and by teaching them how to stitch, Nazia says she can help them achieve that goal.

Through unparalleled devotion to her work and a sheer passion for pursuing her dream, Nazia manages to earn up to Rs. 20,000 per month.

Forever thankful to her teacher for her guidance and opening a completely new world of possibilities for her, Nazia is looking to expand her business and explore new avenues of providing entrepreneurship opportunities for the women of her area.

At present, Nazia teaches around 20 to 25 girls how to stitch, and urges more women to come forth and play an active role in society and participate in new projects and initiatives.

She wants the government to undertake projects which are beneficial for the youth, so that they can realise their potential and can become contributing members of society. She believes that everyone has special qualities that can be brought to light with a little help.

Nazia started her own shop for women after participating in the Youth Social Enterprises challenge.

As a student of food technology at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Faiza Waheed Khan is a young woman with her eye on the health of the women of her community. Many women and children in Pakistan suffer from Iron Deficiency which leads to various physical and mental ailments, but unfortunately majority of women are unaware of this serious crisis. Concerned by this severe lack of awareness Faiza wanted to do something to provide a solution and also educate women to recognise this problem.

She was very lucky to get an opportunity to participate in the 'Show Your Creativity' Challenge held by the British Council and YES Network Pakistan. She believed she could make a difference by creating a product which would address the growing iron deficiency in girls and women.

Faiza seized the opportunity of the challenge and went about creating iron fortified "Almond Tella Milk" at her university facility. She added almonds, honey, seeds of different fruits and iron salt to milk, and sold it during a festival at her university.

She also held awareness campaigns, where she informed people about the importance of taking iron or its supplements for a healthy living. Faiza started this venture with a Rs.2000 and earned a profit of Rs.1000.

She is now thinking to commercialise this idea. 'Such initiatives encourage students to find their paths towards success and prosperity' says Faiza. 'My participation in the competition has elevated my confidence and morale. I have found the purpose of my life. I am now fully committed to take my idea at the national level.'



FAIZA WAHEED KHAN

A NOBLE VISIONARY



RIDA ZAHRA

SHOPPING BAG WITH A CAUSE

Rida is a bright, 20 year old woman from Jhang who is very popular at her college for her warm and friendly nature. One of the top students in her college, Rida actively participates in all social events held at her college. Her peers look up to her because of her passion for always thinking of doing something beneficial for her community. She firmly believes that people can achieve their dreams if they stand strong against any odds and work hard with diligence.

When she attended the workshop at her college, she proposed her idea of leading an awareness campaign about the long term and harmful effects of plastic shopping bags on the environment. She wanted to introduce shopping bags made of cloth as a much better and environmentally friendly alternative.

Rida created an entire business strategy herself and managed it intelligently in order to gain profits from it. 'We manufactured very beautiful bags, our range includes pocket bags, zippers and strawberry shaped bags, etc.,' she explains, confident and spirited.

Not only did Rida manage to generate money for herself and her team members through the campaign, but she also managed to reduce the usage of plastic bags in her city.

At the young age of 18, Asia Kausar has already designed a strategy to address the rapid increase of Hepatitis B and C cases among the poor families in Pakistan.

A student of the Vocational Training Institute, Asia got involved in the Social Enterprise competition initiated by the British Council and YES Network. Her entry focused on ways to reduce the threat of Hepatitis B and C among impoverished communities in Lahore.

Backed by her training and the seed money, Asia developed a system of services that addresses prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. She starts with going door-to-door in selected communities to carry out tests to efficiently identify people at risk; recommends interventions to manage health issues before they get worse; and then gives reference support to people who are suffering from Hepatitis.

Breaking down social and cultural barriers to create awareness, and establishing her own credibility among the community proved challenging. Dedicated to her cause, Asia has provided services to more than 5,000 poor people so far.

‘Participation in the social entrepreneurship project was a life-changing experience for me. I used to only see problems and never bothered to look for solutions.’ says Asia, ‘Now all I think about is finding solutions to problems.’

Asia also prepares girls of her community to participate in such projects. Determined to take her idea to the national level, Asia wants to establish collection centers in Lahore and its adjacent areas and to construct a hospital for patients of Hepatitis.



ASIA KAUSAR ASIA V/S. HEPATITIS



SHAZIA

GIRL
POWER

‘Working as a female social entrepreneur in a strictly male dominated society is a challenging job,’ says Shaiza, a young resident of Kotli, Azad Kashmir.

The women of Kotli had great difficulty in purchasing certain items of necessity like undergarments from shops run by men because of the community being strictly conservative. With the seed money received as part of the Social Enterprise Challenge, Shazia, along with a group of girls, decided to open a shop exclusively for women, which was also run by women.

Shazia is a strong advocate of female empowerment and this shop is a bold step in her effort to bring the world of social enterprise to the women of her community.

‘Becoming an entrepreneur at this very young age feels great. Women come to me and appreciate my effort and get inspired to do something of their own,’ she said.

Shazia is now considered a successful entrepreneur in her community; she has employed 2 women who support their family through this job.

She gives the credit of her success to the British Council and YES Network Pakistan. From their platform, she learned to be socially responsible and was equipped with the skills and abilities that have enabled her to work for her community. Shazia is currently planning to expand her business with the vision that you can only bring gender equality if you give women equal opportunity and recognition to work.

A college student, Taskeen was an ordinary person with big ideas and a helping nature. When the Social Entrepreneurship Workshop was held in her college, she jumped at the opportunity of making a change in society.

Taskeen had weak eyesight, and therefore, the first thing that she thought of was to open an eye clinic for the people of her community, which would provide eye examinations and referral services. Taskeen arranged awareness sessions about the eye clinic, and even went door to door to provide people with the information required to get their eyes checked.

In the beginning, she met with discouragement at the idea of a young girl starting such an ambitious project. However, with her positive approach and hard work she was able to convince the skeptics of her effort when her eye clinic provided treatment to over 120 people within her area.

'Though we are not getting any profits but we are neither in loss. I will continue investing my time and efforts for the success of my enterprising idea and will definitely succeed one day,' says Taskeen.

Through her words, she sums up the whole concept of social entrepreneurship perfectly, being a source of assistance for others without looking for financial returns.



TASKEEN
A CLEAR
VISION



ANILA SALEEM A WAXING SUCCESS

When the Vocational Training Institute in Bahawalpur played host to the British Council and YES Network Pakistan for holding a Social Enterprise Challenge Workshop, 27 year-old Anila Saleem had little idea how it would impact her life.

Anila wanted to start her own salon and provide waxing service for women, but lack of funds and resources had stalled her ambition.

During the workshop orientation, Anila realised that with their help she could finally be able to realise her long-standing dream. When she presented her idea of a waxing salon for women, the officials approved her idea. Full of hope and gratitude at being given a chance, and armed with the seed money, Anila set about starting her business.

Soon after, she began providing her salon services to a large number of satisfied clients. Even though she did not earn any profit from her venture, she built a good client base with her quality service and was able to break even after a short time.

Anila says she owes her motivation to her Principal who suggested that she take part in the programme, and gave the idea of starting a salon business.

22 year-old Ayesha Mehboob is a very talented girl who loves socialising and is popular among her large circle of friends because of her can-do attitude.

After attending the 'Show Your Creativity' workshop held at her college, Ayesha rose to the challenge and proposed opening up a food stall in the college premises.

Besides stocking packaged snacks like chips, biscuits and candy, Ayesha also sold homemade Chana Chaat as a novelty item. The Chaat was an instant success because of its freshness and good quality and attracted students, teachers and even the general public to her stall.

Ayesha had also stocked cold drinks, so whoever came to buy Chana Chaat invariably ended up buying drinks to go with it. 'This enterprise project greatly enhanced my confidence and knowledge of running a business and improved my communication skills,' says Ayesha.

Ayesha made an initial profit of Rs.1,000 and is now able to manage her educational expenses with her small enterprise which makes her family very proud of her.

She is striving to expand her project by having stalls in nearby colleges and educational institutes.

She emphasises that women have the potential to become entrepreneurs and they should be provided with opportunities.



AYESHA MEHBOOB THE ENTERPRISING CHAAT GIRL



AYESHA WAHEED SPREADING SMILES

A yesha is a 21 years old girl and is studying computers in a local vocational training institute. She is a little shy but has a proactive approach towards work and serving others.

That's why she is the heart of her group mates at her institute. She is always ready to help others and wants the same zeal in every single youngster of our country

Training program held at her institute polished her skills and she shaped her idea of spreading smiles on people's faces in her community.

Starting an entertainment service business proved to be of greater difficulties as compared to the manufacturing business but Ayesha had courage and motivation to make her mark.

Ayesha along with her group organised an entertainment programme at their institute where more than 60 persons were present.

Ayesha and her team sang songs as requested and also performed.

Audience actually loved the entertainment and they were really appreciated.

'I feel happy that I became a reason of smile for so many people, particularly during this period of time when everybody is frustrated and stressed due to innumerable problems,' says Ayesha.

Ayesha earned Rs. 180, but she considers this service beyond satisfaction because she has somehow served her community.

Being a computer student, she is now working hard to learn computer related skills, so that she can incorporate innovative ideas in singing in future to earn more and serve more.

Opportunity sometimes knocks in the most unexpected of ways. A young graphic designer from Faisalabad, Sadaf had little idea what impact attending a workshop on Social Entrepreneurship would have on her and her community.

The workshop taught the participants to take initiatives to make a change in their community and taught them to think of creative ideas for social enterprise.

For Sadaf, this opportunity was a Godsend; she wanted to do something to help the people of her community to be safe from the potential danger of the Dengue Fever. And the workshop gave her the inspiration to start up on her project.

She held awareness workshops in her area and her institute, where she and her team demonstrated precautionary measures against Dengue. They not only created awareness about the menace of Dengue but also sprayed homes with anti-mosquito spray.

'We disinfected a large area and managed to earn Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000 monthly by spraying 100 homes,' says Sadaf.

Sadaf believes that the youth of Pakistan have talent, ability and passion and if offered a platform and a direction, then they can easily become contributing members of society.



SADAF DRIVE TO DRIVE-AWAY DENGUE



BAKHTAWAR YASMEEN

A PASSION FOR FASHION

A student of the Vocational Training Institute in Bahawalpur, Bakhtawar had a passion to make a difference, but when she thought of ways to make the change, she always drew a blank. The conservative culture of her city did not support the idea of women venturing out of the house and running a business.

All that changed when Bakhtawar attended the 'Show Your Creativity' workshop held by the British Council and YES Network Pakistan. She realised there were many different things she could do if she channeled her resources in the right manner.

She wanted to start a jewelry making business and her creative idea was approved and funded immediately.

Making her mark in a male dominated, conservative society was a tough challenge but Bakhtawar quickly overcome this initial hurdle and started her business successfully. Very soon, her efforts bore fruit and she earned a profit of Rs. 2000.

For her, the experience of social entrepreneurship was very exciting and liberating. It made her realise that a little effort and dedication can help people achieve a lot.

Bakhtawar plans to open her own jewelry shop in the future.

Making a profession out of a hobby is the best thing a person can do, and this is exactly what 19-year-old Farkhanda did. Since her early years, Farkhanda showed signs of being a creative child. She was very skillful with her hands and applied Henna on people's hands as a hobby.

A student at the Vocational Training Institute in Bahawalpur, Farkhanda heard about the workshop held by the British Council and YES Network Pakistan through one of her training programs and was very interested to attend.

Through the workshop, she learned that there are virtually unrestricted entrepreneurial opportunities that people can take advantage of so she decided to turn her hobby into a profession and proposed starting her own business of Henna application.

The plan got approved quickly and she was granted the seed money to start her business, and very soon, she was able to serve several clients.

Farkhanda thoroughly enjoyed this project, as people loved her unique Henna designs and showed her a lot of support for her effort. She was able to break even on her investment in a short time.

She hopes that such initiatives are offered regularly so that many people can benefit from them.



FARKHANDA
NAWAZ

**A HAND FOR
HENNA**



IQRA ABDULLAH

OPENING UP TO A NEW WAY OF THINKING

Iqra Abdullah heard of the Social Enterprise Workshop and the 'Show Your Creativity' challenge through one of her friends at her institute. She attended the workshop with her friends and was very excited about the entrepreneurship opportunity that the workshop offered. What surprised her was that women were encouraged to participate and become social entrepreneurs. Such a concept was strange to Iqra because in her community, the idea of women running a business was unheard of.

At the workshop, Iqra learned of completely new things and ideas that totally revolutionised her thinking. She learnt of the approaches adopted by female social entrepreneurs over the world and realised that she could also do something to make things better for her community and society.

She submitted her idea of starting a fashion designing and glass painting business. Her idea was approved and she was sanctioned Rs. 1000 as well as the duration of two weeks to complete her challenge.

With the money in hand, Iqra got to work. She bought the required supplies and materials from the local market and very soon, was creating beautiful hand painted mugs and glasses, as well as making beautifully designed clothes for women and girls. She managed to gain a decent profit at the end, and was very satisfied with her effort.

Iqra believes that such opportunities as the ones provided by this project should be introduced on a more frequent scale, so more and more people can benefit from their guidance and support.

A small town girl with big hopes and dreams, Ayesha Usman is a spirited 22-year-old student who loves to cook. She hoped to one day turn her passion for cooking into a profession by starting a food business.

When she first learnt about a social enterprise workshops through one of her training programmes, she was very interested to attend because the programme touched upon the very subject of her interest. She got her chance early when the 'Show Your Creativity' challenge was held in her area.

Knowing that her skills lay in cooking, she decided to start the business of making and selling homemade Biryani. With the money she received, she quickly set up her Biryani stand and was able to earn a profit of Rs. 900. Ayesha is very happy that she got the opportunity to make a living out of something that she loves to do.

Her spicy and delectable Biryani created over 300 satisfied customers, which is a huge achievement for a new entrepreneur. She says that working with the British Council and YES Network Pakistan was a great experience as it gave a much needed boost to her confidence - an essential trait to have in the world of business.



AYESHA
USMAN

**FROM
PASSION TO
PROFESSION**



MISHA KASHIF

MISHA'S HOMEMADE RECIPE FOR SELF-HELP

Misha is a student of the Agricultural University in Faisalabad. A young woman of 20, Misha likes to take care of her appearance and feels that people have become neglectful of themselves in trying to keep abreast of the fast-paced life of today. She wants to bring people back to taking better care of themselves and plans to start her own range of organic and herbal beauty products.

She shared her idea at the 'Show Your Creativity' challenge held by the British Council and YES Network Pakistan, which approved her creative idea and provided her the funding to launch her enterprise. Misha was proud of her project; she took extra care to properly research and develop the homemade beauty products.

She worked hard at convincing the people about the benefits of using her products and highlighted the fact that they were completely chemical free, herbal items. People welcomed the idea of homemade, organic beauty products and particularly appreciated the herbal masks and hair oil.

'We can never progress unless we learn to tackle the difficulties that come in our way with courage and steadfastness', says Misha.

Misha made Rs. 3000 from her venture. Such a positive response has motivated her to expand her enterprise. She plans to do further research to improve her products and then launch her range citywide and ultimately launch her line on a national level.

She says that youngsters should recognise their talent and must come forward and utilise them in helping the society prosper.

Sadia is a resident of Jhang, the capital city of Jhang District in Punjab. At 19 years of age, Sadia possesses a socially aware spirit and is saddened by the lack of environmental awareness in society. The one thing that she passionately detests is the use of plastic bags. Aware of their environmentally hazardous nature, Sadia she wanted do something to change people's habit and dependency of plastic bags.

For the 'Show Your Creativity' challenge, Sadia and her team put forth the ingenious idea of limiting the use of plastic bags by providing an affordable and environmentally friendly alternative; they decided to make bags made of cloth. Their idea was approved and funded instantly.

She faced some initial problems of cost management due to constantly fluctuating prices of the raw materials, however, she and her team worked hard, undeterred, to make this project materialise. Finally, their diligence paid off and they were ready to launch their enterprise. Sadia started an awareness campaign at her institute and educated people about the harmful consequences of using plastic bags and urged them to convert to her nature friendly alternative.

Her project was an immediate success. People bought her bags, supported her idea, and gave a lot of encouragement to her and her team.

At present, she is self employed and studying as well. She is of the opinion that if the government takes a bit more notice and provides a few more opportunities, the youth of the nation can really help turn around the fortune of the country.



SADIA HUSSAIN

GOING GREEN



IQRA JABEEN

WOMAN ON TOP

A resident of Karimabad; a very underdeveloped and conservative area of Karachi, Iqra was a strong advocate of the independence and self reliance of women and felt that women should have an equal opportunity to become active members of society. The idea of equal participation for females was frowned upon, in her community. In order to change this restricting and antiquated norm, and help women become confident contributing members of society, Iqra needed help.

When she attended the Youth Social Enterprises programme held in her hometown, she hoped to turn her idea into reality. Iqra decided to start her own skills training center exclusively for women to train them to learn necessary skills to help them generate some income for themselves and their family and progress in society as individuals.

Changing the prevalent mindset of the people of her community proved to be the biggest challenge for her to overcome. With the help of dedicated team members, and the seed money that was provided to her, Iqra launched an aggressive awareness campaign where she went door-to-door convincing people of the advantages of her vision.

All her effort and hard work paid off and she established the skills training center, which offers a variety of courses such as beautician courses, handicrafts, stitching and computer courses. 'All of our courses are quality oriented and cost effective,' said a very proud and happy Iqra.

Saiqa, 28, belongs to the Sahansa District in Kohli. She was studying at the Vocational Training Institute in her town when a workshop on social enterprise was held at her institute.

Inspired by the proceedings, she decided to do something to contribute to her society. Saiqa started giving stitching classes to girls and also opened a small shop for women and began providing a variety of different goods and materials for young girls and women.

She trained around 40 girls to learn stitching. Saiqa met a number of different people during this project, which helped her gain confidence and improved her communication skills.

However, due to ill health, she had to hand over the project to her colleague Ms. Shazia. During her time on the project, she was able to earn an average of Rs. 20, 000 per month. Saiqa thanked the British Council and YES Network Pakistan for the help and support they provided, and believes that this project has benefited her greatly.

Saiqa still has the desire to continue working so she can provide better opportunities to others and help make them self reliant and independent.

She feels that the government must try to introduce opportunities to the youth to establish themselves. At present, she is working on her own social entrepreneurship venture.



SAIQA
YASEEN
**A STITCH
IN TIME**



IRAM RAMZAN DESIGNING A NEW LIFE FOR HERSELF

22 year-old Iram Ramzan is a prime example of how women can take control of their lives and live a happy, successful and financially self-sufficient life. She attended a workshop on Social Enterprise held by the British Council and YES Network Pakistan, and felt the urge to do something for herself and the people of her community. She got a loan of Rs.1500 in order to start her business of children's garments.

Several problems occurred at the initial stages of her project, the most challenging of which was to gather resources. Trying to convince people to get involved in what she was doing by helping her with her project was a tough task. However, her persistence, determination, and faith in herself paid off, and she finally managed to get enough resources and work force, to get started.

Overcoming this initial hurdle really motivated her, and really helped her self-confidence, allowing her to deal with the public in a much confident manner. Her misconception was removed that girls cannot become entrepreneurs in a conservative society as the one to which she belonged.

Through her project, she helped 12 people and made Rs. 2200 in a period of two weeks. She owes her gratitude to the British Council and YES Network Pakistan for granting her the opportunity to gain such an experience.

Iram now runs her own small business and works towards improving opportunities of self-reliance for the youth of her community.





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