



Norwegian Embassy
Islamabad



Skilled women



Empowered women

Bringing Change By Skilling
Women Of Pakistan

Excellence is not gender specific



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Islamabad, Pakistan
November 2020

TVET Sector Support Programme

Energy, agriculture and human capital are some of Pakistan's potentials, which have not yet been sufficiently used due to lack of required skilled workforce. Nearly 27% of the youth complete secondary education and a very small percentage acquire employable skills. A major portion of the youth drifts off into the informal sector and learns various vocational skills through the traditional Ustad-Shagird system. Annually 1.8 million young people enter the job market, but as of 2018 there are only 433,237 places available in the formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through 3,740 institutes across Pakistan. Apart from this mismatch between demand and supply, even quality and relevance of the training delivered is not according to the demands of the job market.

To improve access, quality, equity and relevance of TVET, the Government of Pakistan has embarked upon a comprehensive reform in 2011 with the support of European Union and the governments of Germany, the Netherlands and Norway. The first phase of the reform, which is based on the National Skills Strategy (NSS), has ended in December 2016. During this period a number of milestones have been achieved such as national TVET Policy, National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) and the introduction of Competency-Based Training & Assessment (CBT&A) etc.

The second phase of the TVET Sector Support Programme has been launched in January 2017 for another five years. The Programme is supported by the European Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Royal Norwegian Embassy. The overall objective of the Programme is to improve governance and private sector participation in the TVET sector to increase quality skill development that meets the demand of the labour market.

**“I was taught that
the way of progress
was neither swift
nor easy”**

— *Marie Curie* —



Bringing Change by Skilling Women of Pakistan

Every story of success has a motivation compelling the central character to push the limits and go extra mile. We have so many stories of struggle, resilience, hope and success to share under our initiative of skilled youth of Pakistan. TVET Sector Support programme was launched in 2011 by the Government of Pakistan to reform and regulate the technical vocational education in the country. In first phase of the programme milestones like formulation of National TVET Policy, National Vocational Qualification framework (NVQF) and introduction of Competency-based training and assessment were achieved.

In second phase targets are set till 2021, where some of them are already achieved like trainings of young men and women across the country in numerous trades from master chef to the IT based skills. Essence of the technical and vocational training is the competency-based hands-on skills which are practically beneficial for the youth of Pakistan.

Considering the fact, Pakistan's youth is almost 64% of the total population which is a huge potential if converted into a skilled workforce. Out of this young labour market of 3 million, women make 53% of the total workforce but have very few opportunities of equal employment and learning especially in technical trades.

TVET Sector Support Programme gave a hope to this segment of the society and trained them in different trades according to international standards of the market. Opportunities of employment with hands-on and workplace-based trainings have been increased for them. When COVID-19 hit the world by a surprise and rattled the basis of economy, this segment of unemployed female population was badly affected. This pandemic not only affected particular segments of the population but it also affected the health and economic structure of Pakistan.

TVET Sector Support Programme assisted provincial government of Sindh in this time. Idea of the assistance was to produce emergency health care material (PPE suits and surgical masks) by engaging trainees of their programmes in their own institutes. This support proved as of great importance not only for the health department of Sindh but for the unemployed skilled trainees. On one hand, provincial Government was facing the shortage of emergency health care material for doctors and paramedics and on the other trainees under the programme were suddenly out of jobs due to pandemic. Therefore, the preparation of 50,000 PPE kits and 10,000 surgical masks not only helped the local authorities in facilitating the front-line workers but gave an opportunity of employment to the neediest at that time. This whole campaign of preparing this material had emotional and financial connections to dozens of people who felt hopeless in darkest time of financial constraints due to the economic lockdown in the country.

These stories of our female trainees have everything one might be looking for inspiration and motivation in challenging times. TVET Sector Support Programme with the support European Union, and the government of Germany and Norway is committed to provide better skilled youth to the country in mitigating the economic challenges being faced by Pakistan.



Misbah Tasleem

Misbah, a young, visionary girl from a financially struggling family living in Orangi Town, Karachi has three sisters and a brother. Her father drives a rickshaw to feed his children and pay for their education. Currently studying to complete her Intermediate and teaching at a nearby school, she wishes to complete her degree in Biotechnology, but such dreams are not affordable unless scored an additional source of income.

COVID-19 felt like a nightmare for Misbah because her school was suspended and even her father had to sit at home and could not earn anymore. This was the toughest time for the whole family as they depended on daily wage and small monthly income of Misbah's father. She heard about TVET Sector Support Programme through a friend which could prove as a new hope in form of hands on skills in dress making.

Misbah chose to learn dress making course and performed really well while learning this skill. "I am going through times of financial constraints and lesser opportunities of earning a livelihood to play my role in helping my father and brother. But I am not afraid! I have high hopes that through this learning, I shall be able to support my family by making dresses and selling them in the local market" she self-assuredly shares.

She plans to start a school for underprivileged children in her vicinity and teach them vocational skills along with conventional education. Misbah wishes to help her community by empowering herself through learning these skills and further teaching to others; her plans are of the nature that will not reap benefits for herself only but to the whole community.





“It’s my dream to help my community by empowering myself and others through skills learning”

©TVET SSP



“I am happy that now I feel confident to secure a better future for my children through my skills-based work.”

Saima Salahuddin



36-year-old Saima Salahuddin's story of her struggle and breaking the stereotypes is exemplary in many ways. She is a housewife with four kids and her husband runs a Zari house but not earning enough to easily pay rent of their house and feed family.

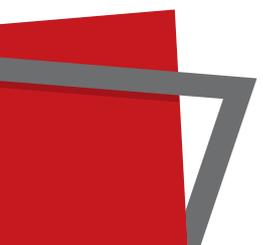
Saima found about the training courses offered at Charter for Compassion but feared of leaving kids alone at home. Leaving the boundaries of her home for learning was a great challenge for her. Surprisingly her eldest daughter (12 years old) encouraged and convinced her and took the responsibility to take care of brothers and sisters while she is at training institute.

Saima got herself enrolled at Charter for Compassion and mastered her dress making and stitching skills. Charter for Compassion is one of the training partners of TVET Sector Support Programme which is implementing workplace-based training projects in Sindh and Balochistan. The programme funded by the European Union and the governments of Germany and Norway.

'It's only my daughter's support which made it possible for me to complete this training' speaking with joy she said. Now I feel that through this complete learning process, I have not only learnt a skill but also contributed to a big task as during my training I stitched PPE kits and masks for the healthcare workers in Sindh in the time of COVID-19.

Now she is planning to work independently and add some other female members in staff. This will be an empowering initiative for other female workers and for Saima who struggled hard to learn the skill. Her passion for securing a better future for her kids is finally about to get in shape. She is confident that with this skill her husband and she would be able to secure a better livelihood and education opportunities for their young kids.





“

*I alone cannot
change the world,
but I can cast a
stone across the
waters to create
many ripples.*

— Mother Teresa —

”



Fazila Tasleem

A hardworking and young 21 years old Fazila shares her thoughts with gleamy eyes foreseeing herself as a successful individual of society. Her father is a hepatitis patient who is unable to do financially enough for his six children to secure better education and living amenities. After reading an ad at a neighbour's house, Fazila convinced her parents to let her start a training course near her house at Charter for Compassion.

"I wanted to empower myself with some skill to support my family and my education as I want to have a degree in Biotechnology or Information Technology. I do not want to spend my life being dependent on others instead I want to transform myself as a support to my family".

Her parents allowed her to attend the training. Every other day of learning brought her confidence that she would finally be able to achieve her goals. She completed her training successfully and got an offer for job from her training institute. She is an enthusiastic learner and a confident team player.

Currently, Fazila is studying intermediate and sees this opportunity as a bright hope in making her an independent individual earning to support her education and family needs.





“ One day, on the basis of my skills I will become source of inspiration for all the women in my country so that they learn skills, come forward, perform practically and help to contribute in country's economy equally with men. ”

©TVET SSP



“As I am now a trained individual, I feel confident planning to grow in the field and share the responsibility of supporting my family with my brother”

Kanwal Naz

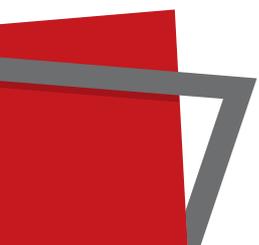


Kanwal Naz is yet another example of motivation and courage to change the course of life by turning herself into a skilled individual. "I wanted to share the financial load of my family. My parents are at home, and my elder brother is hardly able to manage support family expenses" shares Kanwal with heavy heart.

20-year-old Kanwal Naz is living in an area where she had a lot of opportunities of working as dress maker, but she was not well equipped. She has been working as a Zari worker in a bridal dress making unit but she was more interested in stitching. "I had worked as Zari worker for bridal dresses at my area but it does not pay enough so I decided to enhance my skills as dress maker" tells Kanwal while marking some cutting lines on a piece of cloth.

Coming to know from her cousin about the training of dress making at Charter for Compassion, running a workplace-based training project supported by TVET Sector Support Programme, her family allowed her to get herself enrolled for the training. She joined the training programme with the aim to receive the training and train others so that she could empower other girls of her age and create job opportunities for them.

"As I am now a trained individual, I feel confident planning to grow in the field and share the responsibility of supporting my family with my brother" Kanwal express her plans with zealous voice. Kanwal has set up a small manufacturing unit and training set up at her house and she is now training other girls of the vicinity. She believes that one day she will be able to establish a huge training centre and a workplace where she will prepare dresses for different brands and will earn a better livelihood for her family.

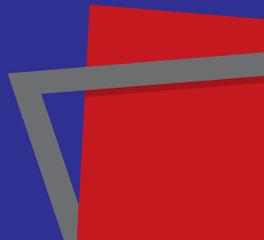


“

*We cannot all
succeed when
half of us are
held back*

— Malala Yousafzai —

”





Kanwal Muneer

For 23 years old Kanwal Muneer always wanted to pursue in dress making and designing. But she never knew that this might become her only profession and reason to keep her financial stream going. Her father died 8 years ago and now she is a bread winner for her family along with two brothers who are working as carpenters. One of his brothers is jobless and four other sisters are studying and helping their mother in home chores.

She used to work from home as an un-trained tailor so could not bring the refinement in her work. Kanwal's neighbour told her about CfC where Kanwal learned the competency-based skills of dress making. The successful completion of training now made possible for her to stitch beautiful dresses. She says, "I used to earn around 2,000 to 10,000 rupees a month but now I am confident that with new set of skills I shall be able to earn better".

Kanwal desires to be an independent and empowered girl unlike many other girls out of her community. Her passion has become her profession now and this thing has brought more dedication and labour of love to her skills.





"I plan to learn at the advanced level in dress making and fashion designing field and wish to work as a famous designer in future."

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“Don't wait for opportunity, create it”

Romana Idrees

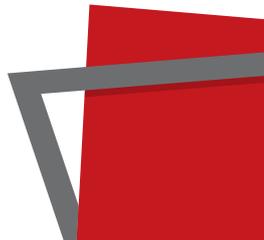


"Don't wait for opportunity, create it". Believing these lines, 18 years young Romana Idrees is currently studying in college. However, she wants to share the burden of her family's financial needs. Romana aspires to be a change maker for her family of four sisters, two brothers and parents. She planned to complete her studies while earning a livelihood in evening shift. She lives in an area where she has opportunities of working as a dress maker in any of the manufacturing units. Therefore, she decided to learn the skills of dress making at Charter for Compassion, offering training in different courses. She has completed her on-the-job trainings and now is in search of a job in her vicinity. Romana aspires to be a change maker for her family of four sisters, two brothers and parents.

She plans to complete her studies while earning a livelihood in evening shift. She lives in an area where she has opportunities of working as a dress maker in any of the manufacturing units. After acquiring the right skills, her resume has strengthened and Romana is ready to serve in the field. She expresses that I have an ample time to learn more advanced skills and grow myself as an entrepreneur in this field. Romana's family is supporting her efforts and attributes it as a vital addition to the family's financial stability and better living once she completes her education and nourishes her hands-on skills in the respective field.

*You will be
defined not just by
what you achieve,
but by how you
survive.*

~ SHERYL SANDBERG. ~





Sabr-un-Nisa

Sabr-un-Nisa's life is a story of struggle and resilience. Nisa's husband went ill and now a mentally challenged person is unable to support the family due to mental illness. She had to raise her six kids and continue her husband's treatment by working as domestic help at multiple places. She never accepted defeat in the hands of tough circumstances and kept supporting her children's education through working at odd hours.

She wanted to acquire a respectable skill to earn a decent amount of money for her family. There she came to know about CFC through a leaflet, offering trainings for different trades. The training project is funded by the European Union and the governments of Germany and Norway under TVET Sector Support Programme. She enrolled herself as student of dress making trade and did quite good in learning the new skill. Sabr-un-Nisa sees this as a ray of hope in dark times of her life and is hopeful of good times having the skills and earning better livelihood while working from home.

Nisa opines that I cannot compromise on education of my kids therefore I learned the dress making as a permanent source of income rather than long hours of working as a maid at homes. She is confident that her skills would bring much better financial support compared to her current profession which is less rewarding both in terms of revenue and self-respect. Nisa's dreams are for the bright future of her children and a healthy life of her life partner, which she is confident of achieving by capitalizing maximum through her skills.

A woman wearing a black hijab is focused on her work at a sewing machine. She is holding a piece of light blue fabric with a floral pattern. The background is slightly blurred, showing a workshop or classroom setting with other sewing machines and spools of thread. The overall tone is professional and educational.

“She wanted to acquire a respectable skill to earn a decent amount of money for her family.”

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“Aiming for a skilled self, Rida hails from a middle-class family of Karachi”

Hafza Rida Muhammad Javed



Aiming for a skilled self, Rida hails from a middle-class family of Karachi. Her ambition was to equip herself with a talent she could use to earn a livelihood and support her family. Rida Javed came to know about TVET Sector Support Programme through social media platform and found a nearest training center of Charter for Compassion and their programme "Humqadam".

She started to learn in dress making training programme of six months, started in October 2019. Rida is eldest of her two siblings and has completed her intermediate education from a local college in Karachi and aims to continue formal education along with the competency-based training.

Rida has completed her NVC Level-2 training and was awarded with a certificate of completion in March 2020. She is now looking forward to continue her learning to Level-3 of Dress Making for acquiring advanced skills. She was awarded with a certificate of completion after six months training completed in March 2020.

Rida is now working to manufacture PPE kits and Fabric masks for healthcare professionals in Sindh under the vision of TVET Sector Support Programme in helping Government of Pakistan during the pandemic.

She feels proud to be part of this esteemed work of producing masks and suits for the health staff during pandemic and looking forward to work efficiently and on bigger scale to help her country becoming a hub of skilled workforce.



Misbah Parveen

Intermediate in Commerce, a teacher at school and a dress making student at the same time it was a different kind of experience for Misbah Parveen. "I have seen my father selling fruits and my brother working as an electrician at a garments factory, working hard and yet fails sometimes to deal with the financial demands of our family" Misbah tells in glooming tone.

"I decided to help my father and brother in supporting our family and started teaching at local school at early age and also continued my studies. I believe that nothing is impossible to achieve if one decides to have it. I am confident and brave and sure of settling myself with something good", she tells while visualizing her struggle in her mind.

Misbah is teaching at a school from past four years but was unable to provide support to her family and looked for additional source of income. Thought of supporting her family made her to become a skilled dress maker through dress making training offered by Charter for Compassion. She joined the training class in the second shift due to her teaching job in morning. She completed her training successfully and started working in evening at a local dress making unit and later started working from home making shirts (kurti) for different brands. Misbah earns a better livelihood after equipping herself of the new skill however she wishes to teach the skills to other people in her area to reduce the level of unemployment and poverty.

A woman wearing a red headscarf with a decorative pattern is focused on operating a sewing machine. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a workshop or classroom setting. The image is framed with a grey diagonal line across the top and bottom.

“I decided to help my father and brother in supporting our family and started teaching at local school at early age and also continued my studies.”



For further information:

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