

# GE4DE GENDER EQUALITY FOR DECENT EMPLOYMENT

## Success Stories

A journey of a thousand miles begins  
with a single step...

Stories of first steps with GE4DE



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Global Affairs  
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## Promoting Gender Equality for Decent Employment

There are many ways to measure the success of a project. How many laws have been made, how many policies have been changed, how many people have been trained. But perhaps the best way is to see how a project has touched the lives of ordinary women, men, girls and boys.

In its six years of work, Promoting Gender Equality for Decent Employment, popularly known as GE4DE, has touched the lives of hundreds of people. Through persuasion and provocation, through incentives and evidence, it has moved a whole spectrum of people towards gender equality in the workplace. This shift has created success stories and controversies, adversities and achievements, but most of all it has helped people to think about gender equality, question the ideas that confine women and men to certain roles, and take action to shape their lives towards a more equal future. These are women and men who in their everyday work and in their daily interactions realise an important truth; women and men working together have stronger households and build better societies.

This publication brings together the stories of such women and men. In their own words they describe how they have used the opportunities provided under the project to promote gender equality in their workplaces and their households. These stories are by no means the only success stories of GE4DE. This selection merely represents the many women, men, girls and boys who have been influenced by the message of gender equality and have used the project to realise its spirit. Some stories are heart-achingly simple – parents who for the first time have been able to send their children to school, women who have escaped abusive marriages, men who have overcome their disabilities and other people's scorn to become productive members of their families. Some stories are inspiring - women uniting to demand equal rights, men speaking up for them.

And some stories are groundbreaking – women in roles where they have never been seen before, new laws and policies promoting safer workplaces for women, and innovative training methods to give women a better start in the world of work. But all the stories prove an important point; gender equality is not just good for women, it is good for all. GE4DE would like to thank the many partners for their support and commitment to gender equality and decent work. Like the women and men whose stories are featured here, the people from the project and its partners have also been changed and shaped by this journey together. In the words of one of the trainees, “we always knew about gender equality, and believed it too. But now we know what it really means, and though we have come a long way, we know how far there is still to go.”



# Firsts

There is a unique exhilaration in being the first to do something, and a gratifying endorsement when your achievement paves the way for others to follow. GE4DE created many firsts – for many women it was the first time they had earned an income, for others it was the first time they had stepped out of their village, and for some it was the first time they had been invited to give their opinion. GE4DE also helped create several ‘first’ structures, such as Gender Units in provincial government Departments of Labour to mainstream gender in labour policy and workers’ issues, or the ‘first’ school-based food enterprise. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and here we meet some women and men who have taken those first steps.



## FIRST FEMALE LABOUR INSPECTOR

“I remember when I was first joined this job, my boss said to me, ‘Why do you want to be a labour inspector? This is no job for a woman. Why don’t you open a clothes boutique or something instead?’” In those days, Mahjabeen was a shy woman, a little overwhelmed by the number of men in her office in Lahore, so she stayed quiet.

But she was also a determined woman. It was this determination that brought her to this career in the first place. She had always wanted to work in government, and when the chance came to join the Department of Labour, she readily accepted. Though she was discouraged by some, most of her colleagues supported her greatly. Her main responsibility was inspecting establishments such as shops, banks, factories and restaurants. She ensured that workers were paid for overtime and saw whether their salaries were in accordance with the government’s minimum wage cap. In one factory she noticed that both male and female workers were compelled to work in a small room which made it congested. Moreover, some of the women had brought their children with them which overcrowded the room even more and hampered most of the people’s work also. Mahjabeen took the issue to the management and requested them to make a separate room for their female workers.





“It was a tough job. It took them a long time to accept a woman as an inspector. They kept telling me, this isn’t a woman’s job, go fetch a man to do this. Some would just blatantly refuse to let me talk to their workers. However in most of the places, even if people were surprised to see a woman, they were generally cooperative.

One day Mahjabeen was called to see Tahir Manzoor, the Director in her department. He described a project to her that he was working on called GE4DE which was trying to get more women into more and better employment, and help reduce and remove the barriers that prevented women from finding and staying in decent work.

“He raised a very important point. When male labour inspectors go into factories for their inspections they don’t talk to women, and women feel shy talking to them. That’s why we never hear what problems women workers are facing. ‘If we don’t know what their problems are, how can we help solve them?’ Sir asked me.” From this conversation emerged the beginnings of an ambitious idea – gender responsive labour inspection. Mahjabeen was amongst the first labour inspectors to be trained on the module, and one of the first to test it in a real factory labour inspection visit.

“We were given a toolkit that had all the questions we should ask women and men according to the laws for which the inspection was taking place. Some questions were particularly about women workers, like if they had got paid maternity leave according to law, or if there were separate toilets for women. Some questions were more indirect,

like we had to ask the employer for wage records of women and men in the same jobs and compare if they were getting paid the same, since the work was the same. We never used to do things like that.”

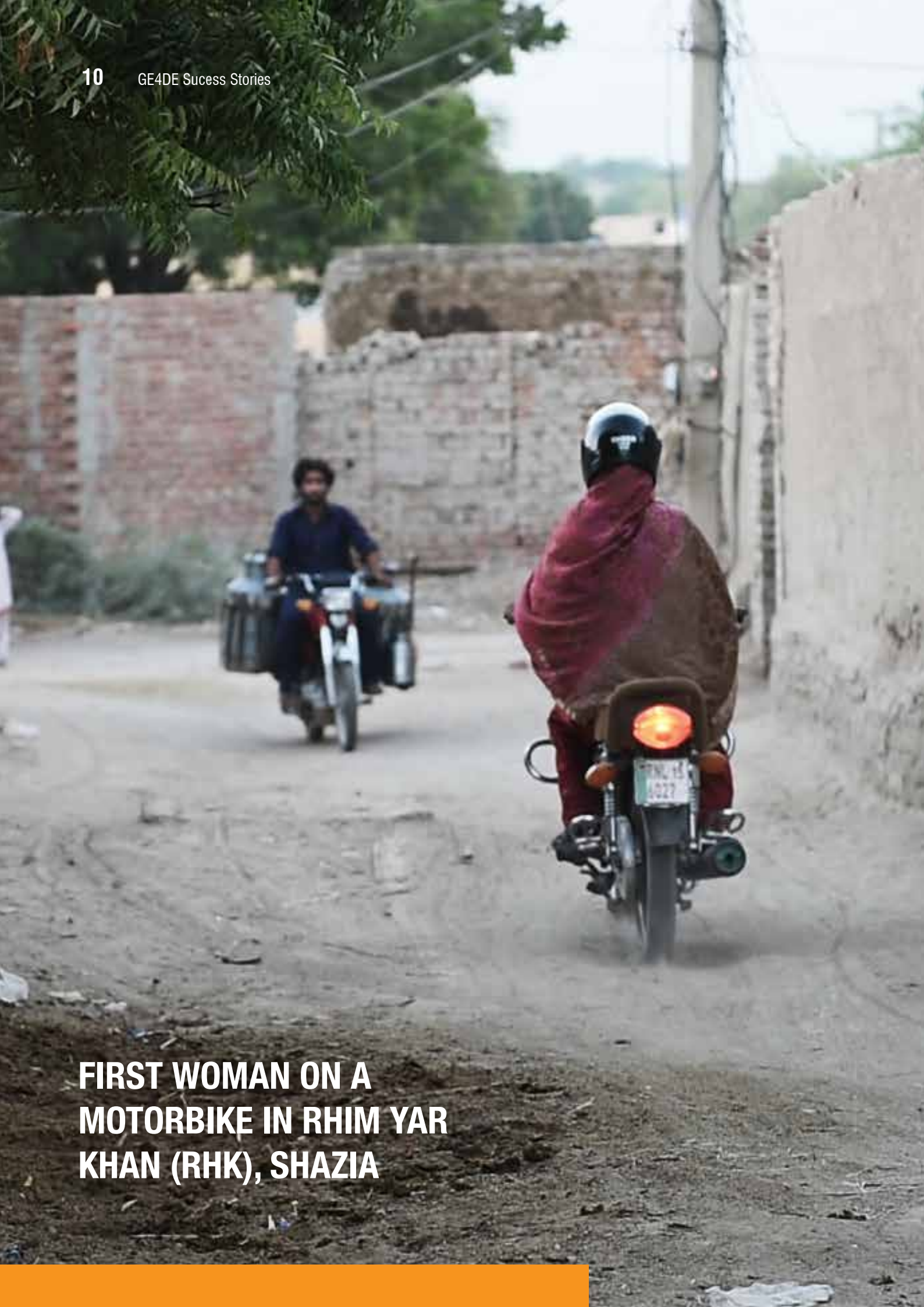
But even with the toolkit and its guiding instructions, it was found that many female workers were more comfortable talking to Mahjabeen than they were with her male colleagues.

“I used to get a lot of information that we never used to know before. Like in one factory I found out that they used to fire women if they got married because they thought they will now take a lot of days off. So some women started hiding that they were married or that they had children and that meant that they couldn’t claim many social security benefits that by law they could, such as marriage grants or healthcare for their children. Sir and I talked to the factory owners and explained why this was against the law, and how employers can make their factories suitable for women who are married and have children. Without any fine or anything, just through explanations and showing the law, we convinced the factory owners, and within three months they not only stopped their policy of hiring only unmarried women, but they also made a room for women to bring their children and leave them with an Ayah while they worked.”

From this it became clear how important it was to have female labour inspectors. Mahjabeen was then involved in designing a project especially to recruit women as labour inspectors, to train them on gender-responsive labour inspection, and provide them the

support they need to do their work, primarily safe transport to visit factories and perform inspections. This project idea was taken up in all the provinces, and within a year of Mahjabeen starting work on this initiative, there were women working as labour inspectors, for the first time, in all of Pakistan.

“I used to be the only female labour inspector and now there are a few, and soon there will be many. But I am still the first one!”



**FIRST WOMAN ON A  
MOTORBIKE IN RHIM YAR  
KHAN (RHK), SHAZIA**

“What was I supposed to do? These women wanted me to teach them sewing and embroidery and involve them in my garments business, but they lived in the next village. There was no transport for them to come to me or for me to go to them. So I did what any man would have done. I bought myself a motorbike and drove myself to Basti Khandoo to teach the women there. I have worked so hard for so many years to get here, how could I let myself get stuck now?” Shazia always knew it was up to her to make her family’s life better. With six children and a husband living in a small house, if she wanted to give her children a future better than hers she knew she had to find work. She tried a few things but couldn’t find the direction she was looking for. She had taken a sewing course and started sewing clothes for people in her village and making a bit of money from it. Then she started taking bulk orders from someone and was the quickest to complete them. But the breakthrough came when she took training on enterprise development offered by the ILO in her village.

“The training showed me how I could use my skills to plan and set up my own business. Rather than working for someone else and waiting for work to come to me, I was taught how to plan a business model, when to invest and when to spend, when to expand and how to manage people and profits.”

Shazia had the skills. She had the motivation. And now she had a business plan. She started with a small loan and bought three Juki machines, a type of sewing machine with a wide range of stitching options and giving a neater finish. “If you produce high quality

products you can demand higher prices. The training showed me how saving costs by compromising on quality just reduces your profits and eventually even the orders might stop.”

She went on to employ 14 other women from the village to help her complete the work orders she would get for dressmaking, embroidery, and bed sheet sets.

“As people heard of my business and my success other women also started asking me to teach them and help them either get work with me or set up their own businesses in their own village. One group of women was in a village half an hour away. They were willing to pay me a little bit for my services but even that wasn’t enough to hire transport every day. There was no public transport between the villages either. I thought of telling the women sorry I can’t help you.”

It was at this moment that Shazia remembered an important lesson of the enterprise development training she had attended. “‘Define the problem?’ our trainer used to say. And then she would ask, ‘so are you going to accept it or are you going to get up and do something about it?’ And I realised I had to do something about it.”

Shazia was not going to accept that lack of transport was going to stop her from helping these women and possibly expanding her own business in the process. She checked her savings and went out and bought a motorbike.

“It took me 3 days to learn to ride it. My brother helped me to learn. At first people would stare at me with

astonishment. They were not used to seeing a woman driving a bike!” Shazia on her motorbike is not an uncommon sight anymore. She uses it to go to the market to buy materials for her business, something she had to rely on to hers to help her with before. She uses it buy her groceries. And she also drives her children to school on her motorbike.

“Someone was once the first woman to work in a factory, or start a business. Now there are so many. Today I am the first woman to drive my own motorbike, tomorrow there will be so many. Men will just have to get used to it.”





# FIRST TRADE UNIONS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS AND AGRICULTURE AND FISHERY WORKERS

It is a sad reality in Pakistan that sectors where you find a large number of workers, especially women, are those that fall outside the purview of labour laws leaving the people engaged in them vulnerable to exploitation and without any recourse to justice. In Pakistan, a majority of women are employed in the agriculture sector, especially in rural areas. In urban areas, many women are found in informal employment doing home-based work from their own homes such as stitching and embroidery, or as domestic workers, employed in other peoples' homes to do their household work. For many years, these groups of workers had no representation, no legal cover, and therefore, no voice. Slowly things are changing.







Under GE4DE work with trade unions and government brought about welcome changes in the status of domestic workers in Punjab and agriculture and fishery sector workers in Sindh.

In July 2014, the first trade union of Domestic Workers was registered in Punjab under the Industrial Relations Act 2010. The first President was a strong and determined domestic worker called Merry Shamshad, but some personal circumstances at home meant she could no longer continue. The 1600 members, 85 percent of whom are women, elected Aroma Shahzad, with her background in workers' rights, law, and excellent spoken and written skills, to represent them as their President, and Munazza Ishaq, herself a domestic worker, as Vice President. The Domestic Workers' Union has officially participated as the recognized representative organization in consultations on Punjab's first Domestic Workers' Policy, currently pending approval. They have drawn up a widely endorsed draft contract which they hope will become the blueprint for a fair and transparent engagement between them and their employers. They have been featured on BBC, interviewed by the local press, and recently the Union has become a member of the International Domestic Workers' Federation, providing them with the chance to become part of a global network of domestic workers organisations and trade unions and learn and share experiences. Most domestic workers come from a background of poverty and low skills, and they are employed on low wages as household help. There are many problems, but the trade union and its recognition by and engagement with government and employers is the first important step towards recognizing the value of domestic

workers' work. Domestic workers take care of the most important things life, our homes, our children. We must also take care of domestic workers.

Similarly agriculture and fishery sector workers form the backbone of our economy. They provide the food we eat and export and have the closest relationship with the land that makes our country. Yet until 2014, the millions of women and men working in this sector were not even recognized by law as workers. Sindh is the first province to change this. In 2014, as part of the law review exercises done under the GE4DE project, Sindh government expanded the legal definition of workers to include agriculture and fishery sector workers.

Pakistan Workers' Federation was supported in turn to establish the first trade union, and thus the Sindh Agriculture and Fishery Workers' Union (SAFWU) came into being. Beginning with 80 members, SAFWU now has 1666 members, half of whom are women, including the Chairperson and Joint Secretary, Rafia Ghulam and Rafia Panwhar. For the President, the formation of the Union was the realization of a promise. When he took part

in ILO's Leadership and Paralegal skills training programme, Asadullah Memon pledged he would work to organize agriculture and fishery sector workers in the mandatory action plan all participants had to submit. A year later, given the opportunity that emerged from the amendment in law, he had fulfilled his pledge.

Since then SAFWU has been active in mobilizing workers from all around the province through regular seminars and events to raise awareness. They meet in farmlands, outside press clubs, engage parliamentarians and farmers alike, to advocate for the recognition of their contribution and to enjoy the rights all workers around the world should have – a fair wage, fair working hours, safe working conditions, and the right to collectively bargain on these issues, free of harassment and discrimination.



## FIRST SOLAR MOBILE CHARGING UNIT IN LASBELA



Waseem always knew he wanted to run his own business but none of his ideas really seemed to take off. He had tried selling crackers and boiled eggs, groceries and household goods, but the businesses weren't flourishing. He did make enough to complete his undergraduate education but even with an F.A degree he could only get a low-skilled job at a local government department. His thoughts turned to business again.

"I attended the ILO business training hoping it would give me ideas on what to do. The most important lesson it taught was to look for business opportunities around you. What are the problems your community faces that can be addressed through a business solution? What are the goods and services that your community needs but are not available and you can provide for a charge?"

This thought stuck in Waseem's mind and before long he had a business idea.

"Our village only gets a few hours of electricity. And other than that we have no power source. People complained often that they couldn't charge their mobile phones and that meant they were even further cut off. Mobile phones are a common part of everyone's life now and it is problematic to be without one." Waseem had discussed solar energy in his training and had learned how other communities were using solar panels. If they could be used for lamps couldn't they be used for charging mobile phones he wondered.

"I did some research, exactly as we had been told in the training - finding out prices of equipment, assessing demand for the facility, calculating how much to charge and when I would break even and when I would

make a profit. Once that was done I set aside the required investment, Rs 19,000, bought a solar panels and battery from the city and set up my shop - the first mobile phone charging station in my village in Lasbela."

The model was a success. And he soon roped his other brothers into business too. His brother is his partner in that he mobile charging station. Together they have expanded the business and bought a portable PTCL internet device and the shop now also provides a data downloading facility. He bought another brother a rickshaw and helped him on his feet, as well as supporting his parents.

"I have learned how a wise investment can grow. I am now researching the property market and hoping to apply the same model to buying and selling land."



## FIRST CAFÉ AND CATERING SERVICE RUN BY STUDENTS AT VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE (VTC) KORANGI

“This was one of the most useful educational experiences of my life”. This is a sentiment echoed by all the graduates of the new culinary skills course at the Vocational Training College for Women (VTC), Korangi. From the outside, VTC Korangi looks like any ordinary building in the Korangi Industrial Area, with a row of large factories on one side and a low-income residential area where many of the workers and their families live, on the other side. But step inside and things are far from ordinary.

The girls in this college are helping run three enterprises and generate revenue that helps cover part of the cost of training and therefore they don't have to pay high fees. VTC Korangi runs three college-based enterprises, a sewing centre, a beauty salon, but perhaps the most dynamic business, and the first of its kind, is the college's food business. Students who take the culinary course run the school cafeteria and also provide catering services to clients who often book the college's meeting room for their events.

The cafeteria is stocked fresh everyday with food the students make during their cooking classes,



but when they have a catering order, then the students plan the menu, the ingredients needed, and the costing, to come up with a proposal for the client. The money made from these services is currently covering the cost of consumables completely. And as the cafeteria plans to extend its business to provide lunch boxes to the neighbouring factories, expand its event catering capability, and meet an increasing demand for hobby cooking classes, it is not too long before they will be making profits and be able to meet the total cost of training as well as reinvest the surplus to upgrade their facility, hire specialists and other improvements. Without this stream of revenue from their business, it would have been impossible to get such high-quality training and education without having to pay much higher fees. Calculations show that a course of this quality, with teachers, visiting specialists, consumables, and a focus on practical training, costs much more than most students could ever afford. But with some funding coming from the regular government budget, and some from the profits of the school food enterprise, students only have to pay an affordable amount.

“The girls are learning the skills and

knowledge required in a culinary arts degree, and they are getting work experience as they study, but most importantly they are also learning how to run a business. They are involved in the market research, pricing, marketing and sales of the products they make,” says Tanveer Tabassum, the dynamic Principal of the college. “Even though we know that a lot of girls prefer to set up small businesses rather than go into jobs with long working hours, our TVET system does not provide any regular business training. But by making the kitchen their classroom and the cafeteria their business, they are automatically learning entrepreneurial skills.”

The importance of business skills is clear from the results of the graduates of this unique teaching method. Since the school started its food enterprise some have gone on to work in hotels, some have started teaching or chosen to continue their education, but most of them have started small food businesses that they run from their homes.



**Can one  
person  
make a  
difference?**

It is a question that we always find ourselves asking and often doubting that it is possible. In a country of 180 million people and just as many problems, can one person really make a difference? Experience from GE4DE shows that not only can one person make a difference but they can make a massive one. GE4DE started by identifying people with passion. Their ardour was then shaped through training, providing these women and men with skills and knowledge, information and tools, to channel their determination into plans, and goals, and targets. And then their enthusiasm was strengthened by creating networks amongst them and bringing them together to share experiences, advice, and learn from each other. Long after they attended their first training with GE4DE these women and men continue to work all across Pakistan helping people find jobs, set up and expand their businesses, resolve issues with employers, making their workplaces better for women, supporting families, and making their communities better places to live in. A small stone dropped in water creates hundreds of ever-widening ripples; who has seen the furthest shore they touch?



## SPEAK UP!

The first time Asma felt the driver's hand brush her thigh as he changed the gear, she thought it was an accident, and tried to edge closer to the woman sitting next to her and the van door. The second time when his hand lingered a little longer she thought it was deliberate. When it happened the third time, she was certain. At first she thought she would keep quiet, after all if women are going to use public transport then this was only to be expected. But then she decided enough was enough. Just the week before she had attended GE4DE's training on gender equality and workplace rights and had spent a whole day learning about the laws against harassment in public places and in workspaces. What was the use of these laws and such training if women were not going to speak up. She had to act. Asma asked the driver to stop for a minute and allow her to pick up something from the building opposite. While the driver waited, Asma walked across to the building – a police station – and calmly asked the officer-in-charge to register a case against the driver for sexual harassment. The police officer was flustered,

"But there's no such law," he said trying to dismiss her.  
 "Yes there is." Asma replied calmly.  
 "Section 509 of the Pakistan Penal Code covers cases of sexual harassment in public. There is also a law against the harassment of women at the workplace that falls under the Federal Ombudsperson's office, but since this incident happened in a public bus you will register the case under section 509." The police officer didn't register a case, but taken aback by Asma's

confidence and knowledge of the law he intervened and let the driver go after a fine and warning.

And that is how Asma's mission to educate women and men about harassment began. She started with the district hospital where she lives in Haripur. Her grandmother was admitted there and she went to visit her. There she spoke to the nurses and learned how many of them had been victims of harassment but remained quiet as in many cases the perpetrators were doctors and the nurses were afraid of losing their jobs. Asma sent an application to the management requesting permission to conduct sessions with nurses and doctors. They agreed and she held sessions there raising awareness about workplace harassment to more than 250 doctors and medical students. She did the same in public schools and colleges in the area, even though some schools were reluctant for her to talk about the subject fearing parents might object. "I persevered and I am proud to say that I have trained hundreds of

women and men, who even though they were professionals or training to be professionals, had no idea about workplace harassment, and the management had little idea on how to prevent it. In one school, after the training, some girls came to me and told me how they were uncomfortable with one of their teachers, both with his behavior and types of topics he would bring up in class. I gave them the confidence to complain to the Principal and assured them that the matter would be dealt with professionally and anonymously."

As a result of Asma's efforts most of the institutes where she has held training sessions, including the hospital where she first started, have formed committees to deal with harassment issues, and more importantly, prevent it happening in the first place.



## GARBAGE TO GOLD

The piles of rubbish just kept getting bigger. First they occupied one empty plot, then another, and then another, and then along the sides of the roads. Every day women and men from the settlement just outside Shahdara would walk past the piles, some ignoring the heaps, some holding their noses, and some cursing the government. But one day, a young girl called Kanwal, walked past them, and smiled. Where others saw garbage, she saw gold.

“I was doing an ILO course on enterprise development and we were discussing business ideas. Some people in my group wanted to start stitching businesses and some wanted to open beauty parlours, but I wanted to do something different.” Kanwal knew that much of the garbage could be separated and sold off, and that could be a good source of income as well as a good way of cleaning up the place. The training had told her how important networks were, sometimes even more than money, in starting a business, so she started by exploring which organisations were working on garbage disposal and recycling. She found an NGO, E-guard, that had been set up under the Akhtar Hameed Khan Memorial Trust that had a low-cost model for community-based garbage collection and recycling. She met them to understand the model and see if it could be replicated in her area.

“I was interested to learn that 60 percent of an average household’s waste is green waste which can be used to make products like organic fertilizer and 25 percent is recyclable glass, iron and plastic. If 85 percent of household waste can be re-used



this way, there is only a small amount that needs to be dumped. But the success of the model lies in waste being separated at the level of the household, and not once it has been dumped when it becomes harder and more hazardous to separate and recycle.”

Kanwal managed to convince 101 households in her community to participate in the e-guard waste disposal model. People from the community were trained on how to sort out their household waste and one of them was employed as a garbage collector who goes from house to house to gather the recyclable waste for a monthly salary. The garbage goes to a central collection and recycling point and the garbage collectors and households get a small sum in return.

“It’s a small start,” says Kanwal, “but look what a big difference it has made in the streets today. The area is cleaner, there is less disease, and people are happier in this healthier environment.”



## UNITY IS STRENGTH

Musarrat, like many women in her village, is a milk seller. Families here own buffalo and sell their milk to middlemen who supply to milk shops in Thatta town. It's mostly women who do all the work, maintaining the cattle sheds, taking care of the cattle, milking them, and selling the milk to the middlemen. It is hard work, subject to fluctuations, and the money is not much, but it keeps the household running.

"We used to give the milk at whatever price the middleman would quote, even if we thought it was quite low," says Musarrat. "Women don't leave the village so we don't know where the milk was being sold and for how much."

Work had been going on like this for years. But then one day, things changed.

Musarrat was taking part in entrepreneurship training and business development training in her village. It was here that she was exposed to new ideas such as maintaining product quality to fetch higher prices, costing to truly reflect

inputs, financial management, and market surveys.

"I started applying the lessons straight away." Realising she could get a higher price for the milk if she could give a higher quality, she improved the quality of fodder she fed her cattle, became more strict about cleanliness of the sheds, and changed the way she stored milk. "All these measures not only improved the quality of milk, but I was surprised to see, also increased the quantity of milk."

She shared these results with other women in the village. Musarrat's husband went to the market and saw that the milk was being sold by shop keepers at much higher prices than the women were getting. The women decided it was time to talk to the middleman and get him to increase his buying price.

"It was a risk, and unfortunately, our fears were realized." Despite the better quality of milk, and the high profits, the middlemen refused to raise the price. But the women stood their ground.

"We decided we would not sell milk to him. It was a big risk because this was an important source of income for us. But all the women took this

decision together and we stuck to it." For many days the women were without a buyer. The middleman turned to other villages to buy milk. But fifteen days later he returned. "He admitted that our milk was better and we were more reliable producers. Milk was available in other places, and cheaper than ours, but it was diluted with water, and the milk shop businesses were suffering as a result. He realised that buying cheap milk didn't pay off in the long run!"

The group of milk sellers were able to negotiate a 50 percent increase in their price. Instead of Rs 40 a kilo, the middleman offered Rs 60. "We were delighted. It was a big victory for us!"

The fifteen days hiatus was a difficult one, but Musarrat was even able to turn that into an advantage.

"I started selling milk and other products like lassi and butter, in the village. I make money from the milk and butter, but the lassi I always give away free. After all, now I know how important customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is."





## A LEADER'S VISION

Trade unions exist to make workplaces better for workers and manage relations between employers and their employees. But when the trade union itself is weak and divided, it cannot represent the interests of the workers, and their dissatisfaction has a negative impact on the whole organization. This is something Sabiha, an employee in a large government utilities organization in Multan, always knew but wasn't sure how to correct.

She attended training organized by Pakistan Workers' Federation and the ILO on leadership and paralegal skills, especially aimed at improving the quantity and quality of women's participation in trade unions, and went back to work with her mind buzzing with ideas.

"I have always been a labour union member, though there are very few women who are even though there are so many that work in my organization. But after the training I took this matter seriously."

Sabiha began taking a more active role in her union, campaigning for timely elections and a fair allocation of work within the union. She briefed fellow colleagues about labour laws and helped women and men with their issues. This work did not go unappreciated, and in the next elections, she became the Vice Chairperson of the Labour Union. She already had the knowledge and the commitment, and now she had the position to begin a freight of changes in the workplace that she has been successful in implementing.

"I started with women's rights as workers. From my discussions with female workers, it was clear that one of the main problems women face in working is the lack of safe transport. That became my first target, and I am grateful to god that we succeeded in negotiating with our employer to provide transport facilities for the female employees."

Sabiha continued her campaign for women and went on to secure separate bathrooms for women as well as sitting areas. She also raised awareness about workplace harassment and is now part of a committee, along with two senior employees, specially constituted to help prevent and deal with the issue. Soon she realized how apparently small problems were also affecting other workers in her organization. "We are a large organization and some of the employees are physically disabled. The most important think I was able to do for them was to have ramps made in the building to make mobility for them much easier. I also secured a special allowance in their pay for them. They were legally entitled to it, but until I read the law in the ILO training, I didn't know about it, and neither did

anyone else. This is the power of knowledge."

Sabiha's work was not confined to her office. There was lack of clean drinking water in Shamsabad; the area where she lives. So she led representatives from her community to talk to government officials and was successful in getting a water plant for her area. Similarly, there was a nearby green space that locals could not access. Sabiha petitioned local influential and government representatives, and the area has now been opened up to public as a park.

But even now, Sabiha feels her work is far from complete. "People are telling me I should run for the next local government elections. Let's see!"





LEARN AND EARN





When Hameeda took up the shawl weaving training she thought she was helping herself on the path of financial stability, but little did she know at the time, that she would in turn, help scores more women on the same path. Hameeda, divorced and living with her sister in Skardu, wanted to contribute to her sister's household expenses as well as save some money to send to her sons who were in their father's custody. "We learned different techniques to weave shawls on looms with a special focus on maintaining quality. We learned everything from assessing the quality of inputs, setting up the frame, and weaving with the fewest flaws possible. There was a lot of emphasis on finishing the shawls. Put together, all these things resulted in much better quality shawls than used to be produced before. The machines helped us weave faster and the better quality meant we could sell more shawls at higher prices."

She worked at the shawl weaving entre in Skardu for a while, but it was clear Hameeda was destined for a different role.

"She was a very patient and sociable person," says her trainer. "She would follow instructions diligently, and would always be willing to help others. Her skills were also immaculate."

This combination of personal and professional skills soon found her elevated to the position of a trainer at the centre where she would train many more women in shawl weaving and helping integrate them in the value chain and be part of the business.

Her skills were recognised by other development organisations working in the area. A renowned development organisation replicated

the competency-based ILO shawl weaving project in the district of Ganche and hired Hameeda as the Master Trainer. During this project she trained 15 women on weaving skills who in turn set up their own small businesses along the value chain, and they in turn train and employ other women from their villages.

As soon as this project ended, Hameeda was hired as a Master Trainer (trainer of trainers) for a similar project implemented by an international development organisation in the district of Ghizer, where she trained a group of women on the same model. This is a pattern that continued with other projects and other organisations throughout Baltistan. At the moment she is employed as a Master Trainer for a new project being implemented in Khaplu and also continues to work as a weaver in the weaving centre in Skardu where her professional career first began.

Hameeda is earning a regular

income from the weaving centre and makes up to Rs 40,000 (USD 400) a month from the projects where she works. She sends money to her sons, supports her sister, and saves regularly. "The whole project told us how to use our inputs efficiently. We have so much wool in Baltistan which we were simply wasting or using just to stuff pillows and cushions. But now we know how to clean it and process it and use it wisely to make shawls and earn money. In the same way, this project has shown us how skilled women are, In the same way, this project has highlighted how women are eager to learn new skills and can generate new jobs and incomes."

"There are probably very few women weaving today and successfully selling shawls who have not been trained by Hameeda," says her trainer. "Though she came to learn for herself, she has become a teacher to many."



## SHOWING THE WAY

Erum Noor Muzaffer has been a journalist for more than twenty years. Since becoming the editor of *You!* a weekly women's magazine of the News International, she has focused on the issues that affect women in their daily lives.

"Even though women are equally responsible for economic growth as much as men and are an integral part of the society, we do not hear much about women's contribution to the world of work. Journalists have a responsibility to highlight these issues because they are the voice for people who don't have a voice, and unfortunately working women's voices can be very weak and therefore their issues don't make it to the forefront of the news. But we can't ignore them."

Erum has been changing this trend. Ever since she became associated with the GE4DE project and attended a training session on gender responsive reporting of labour issues, she has made this a regular focus of her magazine.

"This training helped me a lot in the sense that I was able to see things in a different perspective. It has influenced my writing too and it has broadened my horizons. I got to know so many things which I was not aware of prior to attending this workshop. It helped me gain an insight into labour laws and the issues women have at work, such as discrimination, exploitation, and violations of labour rights such as maternity leave."

Erum is fortunate to work in an environment that gives her the space and freedom to use her platform to advocate for women's rights.



"As a journalist I have a unique position. I can influence people not only by giving them information through the articles the magazine carries, but also by showing them successful women who have succeeded against the odds, and the factors that helped them achieve that. These stories can provide an inspiration to many other women." This is something Erum has experienced personally.

"I have written many stories that highlight the issues of women and work. *You!* magazine has such a large readership that I can reach a large number of people and influence them subtly. My piece on a group of women who run an embroidery centre in Dera Jattan, whose work is so good that even well-known designers buy from them, was very well received. People were amazed to see such beautiful work and impressed by the girls' determination. And young girls are very determined these days to find opportunities to improve their lives through skills and jobs. When I wrote a story on the Vocational Training

Centre in Karachi, and the wonderful work they were doing training women for the food industry, garments and beauty, helping them to enter jobs and start their own businesses, I got so many queries and calls for women who wanted more information on how they could join too."

Since the media holds this unique platform in society, to inform and influence hundreds and thousands of people, Erum feels more and more media houses should encourage gender responsive reporting and journalists' training.

"GE4DE started an important trend in raising awareness and training journalists. The momentum has begun. We just need more of it now."

# Realising Dreams

We all have dreams, and no matter how much of life's realities get in the way, they always stay in our minds. Sometimes we defer our dreams, and sometimes we adapt them. Sometimes we drop them and sometimes we pursue them. It is often a change in circumstance that pushes us towards our dreams, either a new skill acquired that makes its realization a probability, or we are confronted by a problem that forces us to bring it to fruition. By helping young women and men develop their skills, GE4DE has contributed in realising a better future for themselves and a brighter promise for their families. Here we hear from ordinary women and men of extraordinary courage, who have faced the most difficult of situations, without losing sight of their dreams.



## NURSING A DREAM

“We wanted to become doctors, but that dream very quickly came to an end when our father fell ill when we were still in school. We had to drop out of school and look for work so we could help run the household. Our village was near Sialkot city where there are a lot of football factories. These factories used to give football stitching work to women to do at home and we started doing that too. Even though we could start working on the footballs in the morning, we could only manage to make 3 balls a day and that used to get us about Rs 3000 per month. It was hard work and not at all rewarding.

We were really quite demotivated by the struggles we were facing and were looking for any chance, any other option. This is when we found about a course that Baidarie, a local NGO, and ILO were offering training to improve women’s skills and help them find better paying work in factories. We were so excited, it was like an answer to our prayers. We have always had this eagerness to learn new things so we pounced at the opportunity.

The training showed us how to use machines to make different products, including footballs, gloves and hosiery. We were shown how to operate the machines safely, and it was much quicker and easier than stitching footballs by hand. Instead of three a day we can now stitch many times more!

We are now working at a sports goods factory in Sialkot and our family has moved out of the village and to the city so it is easier for us to go to work now. We love the environment here. We get paid



regularly and we also get promotions and bonuses. It is quite common for us to be asked to train and guide new employees, many of whom are men. That makes us feel happy because it means our skills are recognized and we can teach others.

We earn at least Rs 15,000 each and with that money we are supporting our family. We pay the house rent and our younger siblings’ school costs. We were also able to save up and send our brothers to Saudi Arabia where they are working at a children’s toys factory and have also started sending money home. One sister recently got married and we were really happy that we could afford a really nice wedding for her. But what makes us happiest is that our father is much better now and we used our savings to buy him a rickshaw that he now drives and also earns from.

It was our father’s illness that made us start working from such an early age, but that has made our family much stronger. We had to bear a lot of backlash from relatives who

criticized us for working in factories and remonstrated my father for letting us become the breadwinners of the family. But my father trusted us and always encouraged us. Now those very people come to us asking to help get them jobs like ours. They see how far we have come and how successful we’ve been in pulling ourselves out of our financial crisis and now they want to do the same. Our hard work has saved our family and now we are stable again. We have both joined nursing school now. In the morning we work in the factory and in the evenings we attend classes. We couldn’t become doctors, but now there is the chance that we will become nurses, and that is quite close to realizing our original dream.

*Maria and Saba, sisters from Sialkot working as football stitchers.*







## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

"I have always wanted to become a professional chef. I used to watch cooking shows regularly and sometimes I would copy their recipes but usually I would experiment with ingredients and create my own dishes. I used to look for cooking classes but they were either too expensive or too far away from home and I couldn't leave my house for such a long time because I take care of my mother who is paralysed and needs me to attend to her. So, I had resigned myself to my cooking shows and my own creations. One day I read about a cooking and hospitality training program that a nearby government vocational training centre in Karachi was offering in partnership with the ILO. It was a six month course that included

training in cooking, presentation, service, and business management. It said it would help women enter the restaurant and hotel industry or start their own businesses.

During the training we discussed business idea with professional trainers who came to teach us about entrepreneurship and managing a business. I had an idea of starting a cake business and as soon as the training ended, I gave it a try. I baked a few cakes at home and my sister took them to the school where she works for the staff to try. They liked them a lot and soon I began getting orders as my business flourished and praise for my cakes travelled beyond the school.

People started asking me to teach them baking and cooking. So I decided to start cooking classes. I used to charge Rs 1000 a month and started holding classes three days a week in my own little kitchen. There were so many girls interested that even when I increased my charges to Rs 3000 a month, people still keep coming.

We are a large family, 9 siblings and my mother. It was hard to make ends meet, but my earnings from my business have given a great boost to the family. I take care of my mother's medical expenses completely on my own and I contribute to the household expenses too. I want to start a catering business now. That is quite a big undertaking and I will have to employ some more people to help me run a business like this. It will give a chance to help girls like me who are interested in food and can learn how to make a living from it.

I might not be a great chef in a famous hotel, but I am the head chef and owner of my own business. I am taking care of my mother and following my dreams."

*Shahjehan, owner of a cake business and cooking teacher in Karachi.*





## STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION

“‘Why are you sending him to school?’ they used to say to my mother. ‘He is handicapped, what use will he be? You are just wasting your time and money on him.’ I used to hear things like this all the time. It was hard for me but it was even harder for my mother. She had been taking special care of me since I was only three years old when I was afflicted with polio. And then my father died leaving her with the responsibility of supporting the whole family.

She was a determined woman and I think I have inherited the same spirit. While my mother started working at people’s houses as a domestic worker I continued going to school, even though it was more than three kilometres away from my village house in Thatta. I completed my high school and then started working with a tailor to learn stitching from him. Though my mother and I worked very hard, we hardly made enough

money to scrape a living. On top of that I always lived with the burden of my affliction. I tried my best to be courageous and behave as a regular person but deep down inside I knew I was not socially acceptable. But at the same time, I knew that giving up was not a choice.

In 2012 I learned about a training programme that an NGO called ECI was offering in partnership with the ILO. It was about business skills and I enrolled and was luckily selected. Once I joined however, I realized it was much more than just business skills, the training was about discovering yourself and realizing your dreams of a better life for your family. We learned about how to develop an idea into a business, how to look for information on training opportunities, creative ways of creating funds to our business ideas, how to make our business ideas into a reality, and most importantly, how to build the confidence to see your dream turn into reality.

I set up my own tailoring business in the village. I also take orders

from Thatta town. Because I am educated and trained the quality of my work is better than others in the market, and I know how to use this to my advantage. I have trained and hired many others in the village to help me in my business and also set up their own businesses. I have persuaded women who never used to work outside their homes to let me train them, as well as some other men who are also disabled like I am and are not confident about their abilities. Some of the people I have trained work with me, but most of them have found jobs or started their own businesses, and I am the one that has helped them find these opportunities.

Seeing my success and my positive attitude, a number of NGOs working in this area have hired me as a trainer on enterprise development, tailoring and recently I have been trained to train other people in my village on disaster management and I am paid Rs 5000 per session. I have even been hired as a motivational speaker. When people listen to me and they tell me that my words and my actions have made them begin improving their lives I feel so proud. From being someone who needed motivation to the person I am today, motivating others to rise above their circumstances and limitations, has been a long journey, but a worthwhile one.

*Zulfikar, trainer, tailor and motivational speaker from Thatta*





## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

I tried different jobs – I worked for a telecommunications company as a Customer Relations Officer and then later a teacher in a local NGO-run school - but my heart was never in them and I always found myself thinking about being a beautician. I had tried getting a job at a beauty salon once but I wasn't hired because I didn't have any training at all. So then I took a beauty course at a local centre where I live in Lasbela, and worked for a little while at another salon to get some experience, and then I set up a small parlour from my home with some money that my father gave me from his savings from his government job. But I hardly got any customers and the investment went to waste more or less.

I closed down my salon, but I couldn't shut out the dream I had of being a beautician and running my own business. About a year later I heard about business management

training that ECI and ILO were running in Lasbela. Could it give me the tricks of the trade I needed to open up a more successful business than my first attempt, I wondered?

I soon found out. The training showed me how I was doing some basic things wrong. Though it was convenient for me to open a beauty parlour in my house, it was not a good location for customers. I wasn't keeping a good track of my expenses and I hadn't calculated the costs of my services. Armed with these new skills and helped by the discussions we had amongst the group and with our trainers, I started afresh.

This time I put together some money to rent a small shop on Adalat Road which is a more central location. I started keeping a proper record of my inputs, my costs and how much to charge for services. I am also more aware of how to make my services better than others, for instance by being careful about the quality of products I use and following good hygiene practices. As more people started coming to

my salon I also brought in my two sisters to help me run the salon as I needed help to manage my business as it was growing. With all these improvements, we usually make Rs 30,000 profit every month.

We are now looking at new services that the salon can offer. There seems to be demand from amongst young girls in the area for make-up classes so this is a possibility we are looking at now and if it seems it is feasible we will introduce it. This is the most important lesson the training gave me – that it is good to have a dream but it can only be pursued with proper planning.

*Christina, beautician and salon owner, Lasbela.*



## BAKE OFF

Ever since I got divorced and had to raise my five children on my own, one of whom is mentally challenged, I have dreamed of the day when I would be able to make enough money to support my family comfortably. My mother helped me at first with work at a boutique on Multan Road where I sewed women's clothes and embroidered sequins on them. But through this work I was only getting Rs 10,000 a month and that was not nearly enough to cover my expenses.

One day a customer at the boutique told me that APWA and ILO were offering some training for domestic workers, to improve the quality of their skills and work and therefore, help them get higher salaries for the work they do on people's houses. I wasn't interested in being a full-time domestic worker, but I could see that the training, which included cooking and health and hygiene, might be useful in helping me find part-time work as a cook perhaps or supplying cooked food to people's houses as lots of people seemed to be doing these days.

The training was excellent. We were taught different types of cooking

and baking and the dishes we were taught were amazing. And there was a lot of emphasis on how to make sure that the food was prepared, cooked and stored in a very hygienic way. During the training a business idea started forming in my mind and as soon as the training ended I started to put it in action.

One of my favourite recipes that we were taught was pizza, so that became the basis of my business idea. I started by buying an oven and I began making pizzas and small cakes. I took them to some local bakeries near my house in Lahore, and asked them to sample them. They were impressed by the taste and quality, especially my pizzas, and when I offered them a regular supply at lower than market rates, they started stocking my items immediately.

As my business prospered I trained some girls in my neighbourhood and they helped me with my pizza and bakery supplies business. I started making about Rs 20,000 profit a month and it has helped me run my home more comfortably, educate my children and finance my disabled son's treatment.

It's still not enough though, even though I am also continuing my

old work at the boutique along with my business. I am now thinking of ways to expand my market and I have approached two schools in her area which have agreed to sell her products at their tuck shops. I want to print brochures and pamphlets to advertise my products and reach audiences in other areas, but that will take a bit of time and I will need to train more people before I expand my business further. Eventually, I plan to offer home delivery services and have my own van. That is my dream for my business – it started with pizza, who knows where it will end?

*Kiran, baker and businesswoman, Lahore.*







## WEAVING AHEAD

“We didn’t have enough money to send our daughters to school, and it isn’t even in our culture to do so, so it was thought natural that they would stay at home. But I had always dreamed of giving them what I didn’t have, an education.

My husband worked for the government but his salary wasn’t enough to fulfill this dream. Even though I had little support from my family, I tried to do some different businesses, but I didn’t have much success. The first business I tried was a shop that I set up in a room in my house. I would sew clothes and do embroidery on them. With the profit I earned I bought children’s clothes and undergarments and started selling those. But people took offence to me selling undergarments and eventually I stopped doing that. Then I started teaching sewing to women and used to charge them Rs 100 each but I only managed to earn Rs 6000 over 3 months.

I found out that an NGO in Skardu, BCDF, was offering an ILO training programme on shawl weaving and I decided to apply even though I was a bit sceptical. After all, in this area we have a lot of sheep and most women spin thread and even weave cloth and shawls, so why would we need training and how would it benefit anyone?

But the training was excellent. It made me realize how flawed many of our established way of doing things. We were told how washing sheep before shearing them would ensure better quality of wool. Then we were shown how to use semi-automatic

spinning wheels to spin thread from the wool, which is much quicker and easier than the traditional hand spinning with a spindle. And then there was the weaving training, which is what I focused on. The looms we were trained on were better than the ones we have in our homes, and we could weave larger stretches and finer pieces of cloth.

BCDF established us in different groups with equipped centres. So there are certain groups of women who shear and sell wool. Then some who spin it. And then groups like mine who buy the spun wool and weave shawls. I am head of my group and I teach new women to spin too. We can sell the shawls directly in the market or to a production centre that BCDF has established and they sell wherever there is a demand. We have a lot of tourists so our shawls sell a lot, and now that they are better quality, they also get higher prices.

I am earning comfortably from this work. I use the money I earn to pay women who work for me. I pay the rent of our house too and I also give money to charity. But most importantly I have used my money and paid for my daughters’ education. That is what gives me the most satisfaction.

*Razia, weaver of hand-woven shawls, Skardu*



# HeForShe\*

**\*a solidarity campaign for gender equality initiated by UN Women. Its goal is to engage men and boys as agents of change for the achievement of gender equality and women's rights.**

The debate on gender equality sometimes falls into the dangerous binaries of men as violent perpetrators and women as passive victims. Though there is no doubt these two extremes exist, in far greater than numbers than can ever be acceptable, GE4DE's experience shows how varied reality is. There are many men who are advocates of women's rights and who feel just as strongly as women do about gender equality and are working just as hard to take the agenda forward. These are the men who know that gender equality is not just a struggle for women by women but a goal that women and men have to work together to achieve. They know that the more men, women, girls and boys, play an active role in each other's success, the more we can all realise our full potential – and that benefits everyone.

GE4DE has worked with men in all its interventions, whether it was training journalists, helping set up businesses, or changing workplace policies. Some men were gender equality champions right from the start; others had to be persuaded, and some were won over during their journey with the project. Here we meet some of them.





## GENDER FOCAL PERSONS

GFP. It stands for Gender Focal Person, but during six years of working together, for these four men, GF has come to mean much more – Greatest Friends, Gang of Four, Gentlemen Feminists, Galvanising Forces.

GE4DE worked with provincial governments to help establish Gender Units in their Departments of Labour. The Gender Units started small, but had a big mandate - to mainstream gender across the department. And this meant mainstreaming gender both in its functions, right from policymaking to factory inspections, and in its own working, including recruitment to the department and improving the office environment. Each Gender Unit is headed by a Gender Focal Person who works with a team to implement annual workplans which set out gender mainstreaming priorities for each year. GE4DE

has continuously supported the Gender Units in implementing their work plans, providing training and expert assistance to the Gender Focal Persons to do so. As a result the Gender Focal Persons have spearheaded several initiatives that have received wide recognition including gender responsive labour inspection, supporting trade unions for fishery and agriculture sector workers (a majority of whom are women), and making labour laws more responsive to the needs and experiences of women in the workplace.

Under the leadership of these men, the Gender Units have come a long way. They have become the focal point for different donors and organisations working on gender and women's empowerment, and recently have been recognized in the European Commission report approving the continuation of Pakistan's preferential market access under GSP Plus, as one of the landmark steps the government of Pakistan has taken to promote gender equality in the world of work.



*Saeed Sarparah, GFP Balochistan*

### ***How has your experience with GE4DE influenced your views about gender equality?***

Saeed Sarparah, GFP Balochistan: Even though we have been working with the Departments of Labour for many years, decades actually, this was the first time we really thought seriously about gender as an issue. It's a male dominated world, so why should the world of work be different? Even the labour department in Balochistan used to be called 'Labour & Manpower Department' which I started to realize reinforces the idea of productive work being the domain of men alone. So I successfully moved for the department to be renamed to the more neutral Labour & Human Resource Department. It's a simple step, but words have a very powerful effect on thoughts and ideas and in turn, actions. It's because we tend to think of work being a male domain

that even now many factories and offices don't have basic facilities for women such as separate toilets even. I realized that many people don't even know the different ways women contribute to the province's economy, and if they did, they might be more understanding. So I arranged training sessions in the province for all sister departments on Decent Work and Labour Inspection and in there we discussed gender concepts, the position and role of female workers, and their importance in the economy of the province.



*Tahir Manzoor, GFP Punjab.*

***What would you count as your most significant achievement in promoting gender equality in the workplace?***

The development of the Gender Responsive Labour Inspection (GRLI) system was one of the most comprehensive activities. We started by reviewing the way labour inspection is currently done. We picked out lots of gender gaps in the procedures and addressed those in a toolkit and checklist that tells inspectors what to look for regarding discrimination when they conduct their inspections – for instance checking that women are not denied maternity leave, and to compare salary records for men and women to check that women are not being paid less than men. Once we had the toolkit ready we trained labour inspectors in all the provinces on how to use the inspection checklist and we even tested it in some pilot labour inspections. Finally we developed a computerized system where all the information from the

toolkit can be fed and analysed against different parameters. The checklist has been notified in all provinces to be used for labour inspections.



*Irfan Khan, GFP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.*

***What have you done to improve gender equality in your own offices?***

The most important thing we have done is to begin recruiting female labour inspectors. This is important for many reasons. First, in factories where more women work, female labour inspectors will be able to get information about their experience more effectively. Secondly, this will show that labour inspection isn't a 'man's job' only. Women are just as capable and should be encouraged to come into this field and into such jobs which give you authority and responsibility. Thirdly, it will also make the Department of Labour more aware of how to support women in work, for instance by ensuring female labour inspectors are provided safe transport to access workplaces. In KPK the government has approved posts of Women Labour Officers in the Labour Department and now induction against these posts is underway.



*Gulfam Khan, GFP Sindh.*

***How will you ensure that your work continues and doesn't fade away once the project ends?***

We have made sure that our work is enshrined in law. For instance in Sindh for the first time we have extended labour laws to fishery and agriculture sector workers by adding them to the definition in law. Similarly, we have made it mandatory for women to be represented in the decision-making bodies of trade unions in the same proportion that they are employed in the firm. This will help change the trend of only men being in decision-making bodies even if women workers are in the majority. Once something has become law then it cannot be changed so easily. And once something becomes mandatory, people begin getting used to it, until it seems natural.



## QARI MUHAMMAD RAMZAN

Rabia was only in class 9 when she got married, even though she had always dreamed of pursuing higher education. But her father was ill and dying and wanted to see his daughter married during his life. She was married to Qari Muhammad Ramzan, an Imam of the local mosque, but rather than that being the end of her independent life and her dream of getting an education, it was only the beginning.

“People think that just because I am an Imam I am going to be very strict with my wife and will confine her to the house and not let her work!” protests Rabia’s husband. Even when she applied for the ILO training she was refused. “It was because of me that she didn’t get selected. They thought she belonged to a religious and conservative family who wouldn’t give her permission to take the training since it required her to work alongside men in factories. They were partially right; I do come from a conservative family. None of the girls in my family have ever worked outside the house. But Rabia persuaded the organisers to meet me and ask me themselves. And when I met them I told them that Rabia had my support. She always has and always will.”

This support existed right from the start of their marriage. Realising Rabia wanted to continue studying, he encouraged her to do her to complete high school and college after they got married. However while she was in college, he had a heart attack and Rabia had to discontinue



her studies to look after husband. As he recovered Rabia started teaching at a high school during the day and gave tuitions at an academy in the evening. She also taught the Quran on the weekends at a Madrassa. In total, she made a salary of Rs, 15,000 per month, which helped her growing family get by. Her husband would be posted to different locations and in each place Rabia would find some sort of work to help run the household.

By the time they moved to Lahore, they had four children, and were struggling to provide them the sort of life they wished to. This is when she decided to apply for the ILO training. "Rabia made us all proud! She won the best student award and after working for some time as a stitcher in a factory, she was hired as an instructor at the same place where she had trained, Pakistan Readymade Garments Technical Training Institute, where she taught a new batch of the students from the ILO programme. That is how bright Rabia is, from student she became teacher!" And Rabia continued this cycle of learning and teaching. She enrolled into an entrepreneurship development course that was offered by ILO and won second prize for developing one of the best business plans from amongst 47 students. She was selected by UNDP for their course on developing Master Trainers in the garments industry and became a certified trainer. During this time she realised the demand for fashion designers who understood stitching and the need to maintain quality. So she enrolled in a course on fashion design at a local government institute and completed that with flying colours.

This string of successes brought



her to the attention of an NGO who needed someone to manage a fashion design course being conducted in various cities. She started off with a salary of Rs 25,000 which increased to Rs 30,000 when she was designated as the Principal of the program.

This marked the start of a new career managing skills programmes. When her work at the NGO finished she went back to PRGTTI to head the 2 year PSDF program that Chief Minister of Punjab had launched. She has now been recruited by the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission to manage a new stitching training programme in Lahore.

This busy life has meant that Rabia has relied on her husband to share the care of the house and children. "I have never hesitated to share the household work. Working outside the home and inside the home, husbands and wives should manage together. We could not have raised our four children and give them a good education without Rabia's hard work. Before she started working I was struggling to educate my children with a meager salary of Rs 10,000. But when Rabia started working, things got better. I cooperated with her as much as I could. I took care of the children while she was studying or working. My children are now in good universities and schools and are excelling in their fields. Rabia is a role model for my children. They learned how to work hard from her."

## SHAHZADA IRFAN,

*Journalist*

I have been writing stories all my life. I have been a journalist for more than sixteen years and must have written scores of op-eds and features. Being part of the training on gender responsive reporting I realized how women's voices were missing from the news. We (the journalists) were taking working women for-granted and their issues, if ever discussed, were given a superficial coverage in our reports. For instance, when we talk about the labour market, why don't we talk more about the informal economy workers, most of whom are women? They are not covered under labour laws and not even counted in labour surveys. They need a voice and journalists can help them in this regard. When the labour force survey is published why do we just reprint the statistics? Why don't we try and analyse why female labour force participation is so low and how can factors like safe transport, action against workplace harassment, and better training help improve the figure? These are the sorts of questions the GE4DE training made me think about.

Since my association with GE4DE my interest in such issues has increased after the improvement in my understanding of gender. In fact, now I am regularly approached by my editors who want me to write on this theme. I also share more story ideas with our editorial team and many a time we have carried special reports on issues related to gender, especially in the world of



work. Some of my most appreciated articles are on the informal economy including women working as home based workers and domestic workers. I have also covered issues such as women's contribution to the economy and the issue that impede or improve their work. I am sure this association also helped me in my nomination as a Fellow of the ILO-EU South Asian Labour Migration (SALM) Project which involves me travelling to Pakistani labour destination countries and filing news reports on issues that would otherwise not be highlighted. There is a general sanction and acceptability for the discrimination faced by women in the society as well as at workplace. So, I think, this attitude has to be changed

and the journalists can play a great role. Labour reporting with gender perspective can lead to corrective measures by the policymakers that in turn can make workplaces safer for working women. This can also encourage women to join work and change their status from dependents and unpaid family helpers to primary earners.

We think women's issues are only beauty and cooking and victims of crime. But women's issues are the same as men's issues – employment, safety, security, education, inflation, housing, transport. These are human issues. And journalists have a duty to raise them.



## KAMRAN SANDHU

*Principal Pakistan Readymade Garments Technical Training Centre*

In our industry some employers can be very conservative and they believe that women are good at sewing work only while men are better as managers and any work that involves using machines and technology. Even women sometimes believe this themselves! I have worked for many years in the textiles sector and I have always seen that women's work is just as good as men's and there is no job that men do that women can't

do.

I am the Principal of Pakistan Readymade Garments Technical Training Institute and in my training centre I would always encourage women to do unconventional courses like machine repair or autocad that would lead to jobs with higher wages but they would say they are men's jobs and people won't hire them. GE4DE also knew about these biases in the world of work, so they included a very important element in their programme which was research and advocacy to show employers that they should hire women in all positions and how it would be beneficial for their firm. I helped in convincing employers to

employ women outside the traditional jobs of trimming and finishing. Whenever it was necessary I would talk to women's families and take them to the factory to assure them they would be working in safe environments, making it easier for them to let their girls transition from training to work. I feel very happy that my effort has paid off, and hundreds of women have now found jobs as industrial stitchers, quality assurance officers and supervisors - jobs that have mostly been male dominated - and they are now earning between Rs 14,000 and 50,000 a month.

I was also part of the team that developed competency standards that identified exactly what skills women and men would need to get good jobs. I involved industry in providing on-the-job training and making them part of the assessment process so they could see for themselves how fine women's skills were. Because of this hard work some factories devoted whole floors of their factory just for female workers.

In fact I worked so much on training and women's empowerment that I became known as an expert and was even hired by other organisations like GIZ and NAVTTC to help them develop training courses and material for this sector, and help even more women get high quality training and decent employment. I am thankful to ILO that the GE4DE project gave me an opportunity to implement what I have always believed – that if women have the right training and supportive environment they can be better workers than men.



# Turnaround

In the financial sector, a 'turnaround' is the term used to describe the recovery of a company that has been performing poorly for an extended time. In these stories we see how even people can experience a turnaround in their fortunes. While falls occur suddenly, without warning or wish, the journey back up takes time. These stories show how, with a little help from GE4DE, young women have combined skills, knowledge, determination and sheer hard work, to turn their lives around.

## THE BOXER'S DAUGHTER

Madiha's life was turned upside down when her father died. He had taught his daughters to always embrace their passion and achieve something in life and Madiha was doing just that, doing well at college. However, everything came to a halt when her father fell ill. He was an international boxer and it was a shock for his family to see such a strong man deteriorate and die. The family spent all their savings on his treatment and soon they were almost penniless. Friends and relatives also started keeping a distance for fear of being asked to help financially. Unable to continue her education, Madiha now had to think of ways to help her family stand on its feet again.

She had never thought about domestic work. But when she saw that renowned organisations like APWA and ILO were offering training in fields related to domestic work she realized that this too was a proper profession, and like all good jobs, required skills and knowledge, and could help bring in good money.

"My life changed again after the ILO training".

Using the skills she now had in child care, housekeeping and cooking, she advertised her services by hanging a simple sign outside her house. She got a job at a day care centre where she works during the day. During the afternoons she works as a part-time cook for two different households.

"I started earning quite well because I had good skills and I had a certificate showing I am a

professional. I also taught my mother and sister what I had learned during the training and now they work too and together we are running the household." Madiha's sister has also started cooking for a family and her mother makes sandwiches and supplies them to a nearby college.

"I was the sort of girl who hadn't left the house ever, I was such an introvert. But you never know when circumstances might change. And you have to be prepared".







## WORKING TOGETHER

Chand Bibi comes from a large family. “We are eight sisters and two brothers and we have all been working to keep our household running ever since our father died ten years ago.”

Chand Bibi started by stitching clothes at home or embroidering sequins. As her skills improved she started sewing men’s clothes with her sister for a shopkeeper in the city. But though they worked hard they could never make enough to make ends meet, sometimes only earning as little as Rs 1500 a month. It wasn’t until she enrolled in the ILO stitching and business training at the government vocational training centre in Korangi did she realize what she was doing wrong.

“My sisters and I were working but we weren’t managing our efforts as a business. This training taught me everything about stitching and how to handle your own business. I knew

how to sew from before but I didn’t know how to deal with customers or how to calculate costs, nor did I know how to market products. I was doing it wrong all this time; charging such low prices but I never knew I was supposed to add electricity costs, for instance.”

Chand Bibi contacted a local workshop that made readymade clothes for different shops. I persuaded the workshop owner to give me some material and I would prepare the clothes at home. He agreed and thus started Chand Bibi’s stitching business. She now owns two sewing machines and has trained two women to work with her. She makes about Rs 12,000 profit a month. She plans to secure more orders and as her business expands buy more machines and train and employ more women.

“I know what it is like to be poor so I want to help as many people as I can.”

## CHAIN REACTION

Yasmin hasn't forgotten the long hours and the longer days she used to spend working in the fields of a local landowner, harvesting wheat, sugarcane, vegetables and fruit, under the scorching sun, only for a meager amount of Rs 50 for a full day's work.

"The work was sheer drudgery and I was looking for an opportunity for something better."

Yasmin took entrepreneurship training under the Changemakers programme designed by ECI and ILO, aimed to build community level business advisory services in rural areas of Pakistan. Here, Yasmin learned about how to look for business ideas from amongst the resources, no matter how small, available around you. She was trained in conducting feasibility studies, how to raise money without having to wait for large loans, how to plan and price products, and how to turn an idea into a business.

"I started looking at things around me in a new light. My family owned some chickens and I wondered if I could sell the eggs. I placed them in a local shop, and they were sold out in no time such was the demand for local, 'desi' eggs."

Yasmin turned her attention to things that were not available in her village and if she could provide those to sell. Using Rs 200 saved from the first few sales of eggs she left her village and travelled to Thatta town and bought sachets of shampoo and detergent – simple, everyday things that people needed but had to travel far from their village to buy. She

saved enough to buy a small fridge and put that to commercial use by stocking and selling cold drinks. It was just a matter of time and Yasmin had a small pot of savings. "This time I bought a goat for Rs 3000. I raised it, and at Eid, when people buy goats to sacrifice, I sold it in the town and made a good profit. I realized this was a good business and with my profit I bought more goats, raised them and sold them, and then one day I bought a cow for Rs 45,000."

Soon Yasmin had a sizeable stock of goats and cows. Close to Eid again, she sold some of her livestock.

"I was delighted to find that I now had enough money to build a house!" And indeed Yasmin helped her family to build their own house in the village. Where she had once worked in someone else's fields for a pittance, she now owns her own business, livestock, and house. "It's a long way to come from selling eggs!"



## UPS AND DOWNS AND UPS

“My life changed when I got married” says Faiza quite matter-of-factly. Faiza had a comfortable life before she got married. Her father was working in Saudia Arabia and sending money home and Faiza was happily studying in High School. But then her father had to return to Pakistan, and though she was just in class 9, she was married off to a man who not only lost his job but was addicted to gambling.

Unable to compromise to this new, hard life, Faiza looked for avenues to stay busy and become independent. She continued studying, managing to complete her BA and started working as a coordinator for a political party. Though she worked hard helping potential voters getting their ID cards made, often spending her own money on rickshaws, she never got paid, and couldn't forge the new life she wanted for herself.

“I have experienced such desperate and grave times; times when my power supply had been disconnected as I couldn't afford to pay the bill. You can't imagine how difficult it was for me to ask my sister in Dubai for financial help.”

She came across an advertisement for a training programme for women who wanted to work in the garments industry. Unfortunately here too, she met a setback.

“I was told I was too old and would find it difficult to take the rigour of factory work. But I persisted and finally I was given a chance.”



Faiza did not one course, but two. During the day she covered the Quality Assurance course and during the evenings she did the stitching course. She immediately found work at the factory of a well-known, local brand, but this success was short-lived.

“As soon as they found out I was married, they fired me, saying they had a policy of not hiring married women. That is such a discriminatory policy! It is usually married women like me who have to support their families or want to be independent who need work and will work well, but this factory did not agree.”

Luckily, Faiza's qualification and skill level was so good that she immediately found a job as Quality Assurance Officer in another factory and in the space of two years she has become in-charge of the

Quality Assurance department. She makes about Rs 20,000 a month not counting overtime and travel allowances. She is now trying to save up Rs 45,000 to do another course of quality management on ISO 9001 and ISO 9002 which will help her get a management level job.

“My in-laws did not like me working with men in the factory. But I ignored it. I am happy that I am independent and I have a good career. I have a lot of authority at work, and at home too, I am running my own household the way I want to. I am the boss at work but more importantly, I am my own boss.”



# Awards

**GE4DE has always recognized the achievements of the people who have been part of this journey together. Their success is the project's success. But it's not just GE4DE that is celebrating the remarkable work project beneficiaries and associates have done, but others too. Here we meet some of the people whose work has been awarded by organisations other than the ILO.**

## Award Winner

Gender Unit Punjab

## Prize

First prize in the United Nations Public Service Award, in the category of gender responsive public service delivery, 2013.

## Description

The Gender Unit, Department of Labour, Punjab, established under the ILO, CIDA funded project, Promoting Gender Equality for Decent Employment (GE4DE), has, from amongst 2000 applicants, won a United Nations Public Service Award in recognition of its work on gender mainstreaming. The UN Public Service Award (UNPSA) is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. It rewards the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions that lead to a more effective and responsive public administration in countries worldwide. The UN Public Service Awards selects winners through an annual competition for awards in five categories:

- Preventing and Combating Corruption in the Public Service
- Improving the Delivery of Public Services
- Fostering participation in public policy decision making through innovative mechanisms
- Promoting Whole-of-Government Approaches in the Information Age
- Promoting Gender-Responsive Delivery of Public Services

The Gender Unit Punjab stood first in the category of Gender Responsive Public Service Delivery, with India's Department of Cottage and Rural Industries and Korea's Seoul



Metropolitan Government coming second and third, in the Asia Pacific region.

The GRLI initiative began as a checklist for gender responsive labour inspection, and has now become a complete, gender mainstreamed, Decent Work and Labour Inspection toolkit and training module. It has been tested through several model labour inspections and based on the results that show it is a more efficient, streamlined and comprehensive way to collect information, the Departments of Labour in all provinces have endorsed its use to conduct labour inspections. Information from the labour inspections is fed into a web portal that has been developed and is currently being piloted. This web portal is the first time that information from inspections will be available on an easily accessible and cross-analytical platform.

It won the first prize as well as the attention of other countries. Governments in India, South Korea, and Spain have approached the Gender Unit Punjab and are using aspects of GRLI in their own labour inspection systems.

[http://www.punjablabour.gov.pk/events/events\\_detail/1](http://www.punjablabour.gov.pk/events/events_detail/1)



## Award Winner

Asma Shaikh

## Prize

Second prize, UNESCO-UNEVOC Skills in Action award celebrating the use of TVET to improve the lives of individuals and communities, 2014.

## Description

I am a 21 year old woman from a village some 10 km from the city of Thatta in the Sindh province of Pakistan. Rural areas in Sindh are known for lack of development and conservative attitudes of communities. Women often face the brunt of the customs that restrict women's mobility and it is not uncommon for women to face violence when they cross the boundary set by local customs. This, however, is fast changing. Young women in my area are successfully struggling to bring change and improve their own situation as well as the situation of their communities. I am one example of such change. I have taken training in stitching and enterprise development and now I not only run my own business, but also a community business center where I have helped many women and men find training opportunities, set up their businesses, improve their lives and stand on their own two feet.

I come from Thatta, one of the most underdeveloped districts in the country and within Thatta, my village is one of the poorest with little education and lacking in basic amenities including safe drinking water and sewerage. Most of the villagers, including my own family, depend on raising cattle and farm labor for their living. It was quite an achievement for me to even pass secondary education as most girls in my village are completely illiterate. However, I was not allowed to go to school after class ten and I had



to stay at home and help with the housework and looking after cattle. However, I wanted something more.

An NGO announced business and technical training – Change makers: business solutions to social problems, they called it – and I wanted to take part. My family wasn't keen. They didn't think women should be running businesses; that was a man's job. But I insisted and got myself registered. The NGO helped persuade my family and assure them that I would be safe. Now, I not only run my own stitching business, but also a community business center where I have helped dozens of other women and men get training and set up their own business.

I have helped 30 women and men get training in stitching, cosmetician, electrician, livestock management and entrepreneurship. I have mentored many others to set up their own businesses, by showing them what opportunities exist and giving them the skills they need to start a business such as costing, pricing and marketing. Many of the people I have helped train and establish their businesses would have just carried on with their lives as before. They would have been reluctant to send their daughters into this type of work. They would have just kept them working inside the home,

for no money and no recognition. But because people have seen my success, and they have seen that working doesn't bring any harm to women, it instead gives them money and respect and confidence, they have trusted me to guide their daughters too. That means that 30 families now have more money that they can spend on sending their children to school, buying them uniforms and school books, going to the doctor and buying medicines. So, through my persuasion and imparting knowledge and skills to other girls and families, I have succeeded in improving the situation of sanitation and livelihoods in my community. When families' situation improves the community's situation improves too.

Without the skills I have learnt, I would be forced to live my life under the constraints that are the destiny of a rural woman in my area. Just looking around the village you can see the difference it has made, in the last three years, many mud houses have turned into proper houses made with baked bricks. The village looks cleaner and more prosperous.

<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/skillsinaction/skillsinaction/index.php/stories/18>

**Award winner**

Haroon Janjua

**Prize**

Silver medal, United Nations  
Correspondents Association, 2015

**Description**

Haroon Janjua is an award winning journalist covering climate change and human rights in Pakistan and across South Asia.

His report into the dark world of brick-making slaves and opened a window to a world where laws do not apply for women and men, whether they are young, adults, or old people in poor regions in Pakistan and won the silver medal in the UNCA journalists award recognizing the best print, broadcast and electronic media coverage of the United Nations, U.N. agencies and field operations.

“Gender Equality for Decent Employment (GE4DE) training gave me the knowledge to cover various unique angles of labour stories which in the past were not covered, especially those related to gender. Women primarily working in informal sector are often ignored and this training with continued sessions had widely enhanced my knowledge on gender and labour issues in Pakistan. I have written many features about the world of work since my association with GE4DE and I make an effort to mainstream gender throughout. I have written about trade unions, women who have been successful at work, the problems of the informal economy, and child labour. I realize there is an appetite for these stories. If they are written well, people want to read them, because these are everyday issues that concern us all. As more reporters and journalists are trained I think we will see more people writing

about these issues.”

<http://unca.com/2015-unca-awards-winners/>





### Award winner

Salma Rahim

### Prize

The Shell Tameer social enterprise award, 2012.

### Description

Salma dreamt of escaping poverty and inspiring other women to do the same. Salma was married and endured a month of domestic violence before her husband was convicted of murder and sent to jail. At a low point in life she heard about a training programme, Ancient Knots for Have-Nots' offered by GE4DE in partnership with a renowned designer and she decided to join. When her husband heard she had joined this training programme, he sent her threats that he would put her straight when he got out. But Salma continued undeterred. Salma wanted to set up an embroidery centre in her village Dera Jatta, near Rahim Yar Khan. With support from the local TRUCE foundation and her trainer, Salma set up a centre, Zardozi Bridal Wear, and with her sister took over its

management.

She decided to apply for further support through Shell Tameer's entrepreneurship programme. She was selected as one of the only ten finalists in Shell Tameer's International Entrepreneurship Programme., and as the winner of the social enterprise award she won free enterprise development training, English tuition to help her manage her centre's website, and exhibition space.

Salma's appetite for competitions continued and she won a prize of twenty sewing machines from the Kinnaird Old Students' Association. These were placed at her centre and she started taking orders for sewing from the neighbourhood and further afield from the towns of Bahawalpur and Rahimyar Khan.

She ran into an obstacle when women were finding it difficult to travel to the centre to complete work orders. But as determined as ever, she turned to the designer who had trained her, and asked for her help.

She raised money and donated a rickshaw to the centre that Salma started driving herself to pick and drop the women between their homes and the centre. Later, she gave the responsibility to her brother. For a small fee he provides transport to the women and during the day while they are busy there, he drives it commercially between the villages. Through her business, Salma trains and employs over 10 women from surrounding villages who are now financially independent and able to improve their lives, and the lives of their families. "Famous designers have ordered bridal wear from our centre and we have travelled to their fashion shows to see our products being displayed. I would like to become a fashion designer myself one day."

[http://www.shell-livewire.com/home/newsevents/news/shell\\_tameer\\_campaign\\_building\\_enterprising\\_futures\\_during\\_ramazan/](http://www.shell-livewire.com/home/newsevents/news/shell_tameer_campaign_building_enterprising_futures_during_ramazan/)  
[http://www.shell-livewire.com/home/newsevents/news/shell\\_tameer\\_campaign\\_building\\_enterprising\\_futures\\_during\\_ramazan/](http://www.shell-livewire.com/home/newsevents/news/shell_tameer_campaign_building_enterprising_futures_during_ramazan/)





## Award winner

Abida Malik

## Prize

Salt n' Pepper Woman of the Year, 2012

## Description

Abida is no stranger to awards and recognition. She has appeared on a TV show to share some of her favourite recipes to a live audience. She has given a demonstration at Marriot, Islamabad, on how to cook Thai food. She has taught commercial cooking to many women and men. And she has even been invited by the Punjab Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) to give her inputs on a certificate course on cooking that was being designed. Her talents were recognized by her employers when she was awarded Lady of the Year early on in her career as a professional chef and restaurant manager. And she has won awards from her Alma Mater, College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Lahore, for her work.

But her private life has been less glamorous. Abida had a troubled marriage. Her husband did not work and she was finding it hard to make ends meet. To support her family, she started off with selling unstitched material to women in the neighbourhood but that brought home little money. She then tried selling home-made shami kebabs and pizzas from home, and that endeavor met with more success. But though she was doing this to support her family, her husband did not approve of her working and they divorced, leaving Abida alone with their two sons. She wanted to build

on her skills and success in cooking but when she went to COTHM she simply couldn't afford the fee.

Luckily, she had left her contact number with them. And three months later, she got a call saying the ILO and COTHM were running a course on culinary arts, and she was eligible. Abida jumped at the chance and has never looked back since. Abida started her career as an internee then moved to other branches over five years. Now she is working as Junior chef at Salt n Pepper Village. She earns Rs. 20,000 per month and has a staff of 90 people working under her. As part of her job, she trains her team members, most of whom are not well educated, and inspires them to strive for success. Including her, there are a total of 8 women working with her while the rest are men.

Abida also helped her brother in setting up a catering business from home. She designed a menu that had a variety of dishes with Pakistani and international cuisines of restaurant quality, but priced them in a way to make them affordable to people who would not otherwise be able to afford such good quality food.

"My brother's business did very well. Many people working nearby at construction sites were regular customers yet at the same time many people from the upper class enjoyed our food also. We didn't compromise on the quality, that is why we had customers from all income brackets'

However, they had to discontinue with the business as a portion of their house was demolished due to the construction of a bridge that was

built over it. Due to lack of space they were unable to resume their business.

"That was a big setback for us. But I am used to such shocks and I find my way out of them. Just a couple of years ago I was alone and destitute. Now I am a role model for my family and my colleagues at work. . I work shoulder to shoulder with all the male chefs at the restaurant. And I am a father and mother for my children. I am educating both of my sons in private schools and I encourage my children to pursue culinary arts also."

The women and men whose stories are featured in this publication have all been trained by the GE4DE project in partnership with implementing organizations who used and adapted ILO training tools. Some of the tools used in the training programmes are listed below:

**TREE (Training for Rural Economic Empowerment).**

Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology is a systematic approach to ensuring training is linked to economic and employment opportunities, and that disadvantaged target groups, including poor women and people with disabilities, can realize these opportunities and thereby be economically empowered. The TREE methodology provides a set of tools, techniques and materials developed specifically to help organisations in planning, designing and implementing training and post-training support programmes to empower poor people and their communities.

**Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB).** The Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme is a system of inter-related training packages and supporting materials for small-scale entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. It aims at increasing the viability of SMEs through management principles suitable for the environment of developing countries.

**Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA).** This training module is aimed at SME development practitioners working on value chain analysis. GSVCA takes an explicitly gendered approach and applies principles of participatory approaches to value chain analysis, highlighting the complex sociocultural and economic factors involved.

**Journalism Plus.** A training module designed by implemented partners of GE4DE to help journalists integrate principles of gender equality and an understanding of international labour standards and decent work in their reporting.



## About the photographers

### **Mohammad Hanif.**

Mohammad Hanif was unemployed when started training under the ILO-ECI programme to develop enterprise expertise within communities. Graduating as a Changemaker for Thatta, he set his mind to continuing offering training to others in his community to help others find work and solve the community's problems. He set up his own NGO, Local Support Organisation, in partnership with two other changemakers trained under the same programme. One of the first training assignments he got was to train presiding officers from 11 polling stations during the elections in 2013. Since then his LSO has been hired to conduct surveys, train groups of homebased workers, and act as a business mentor in his village. Most recently, he was assigned the task of taking photos to accompany some of the stories in this publication from Thatta, Karachi and Lasbela.

"Before the training, I was just wasting my time. The training showed me how to productively use my time, make money and help people at the same time. I thought it would be a good idea to set up my own organization to act as an intermediary between NGOs and the people they wanted to reach. We identify issues through surveys and help agencies know which areas need to be worked upon."

Hanif's work has made it possible for him to build a house for his family. He also contributes in funding his sibling's education and other household expenses.

### **Abdul Qadir Memon**

Abdul Qadir Memon is a civil servant with an interest in travel and

photography. He has kindly given his photographs free of charge to this publication.

### **Selina Khan**

Selina Khan has a background in HR and Finance and has worked in the investment banking sector as well as teaching at the Lahore School of Economics. She has helped coordinate the interviews and gather preliminary information for the stories and has kindly contributed her photographs for this publication.

### **Shakeel Shahzad**

Shakeel has been working with a camera for the last two decades and has extensive experience in video production. He is one of the most renowned Director of Photography in Pakistan. Shakeel has contributed some the photos for this publication that he clicked during his interaction with the ILO beneficiaries in their home towns.

## About the author

Frida Khan is an independent development sector consultant with more than twenty years' experience with the government of Pakistan and the United Nations. Her interests are skills development, education, employment and their intersection with governance and gender.







## About this publication

This publication brings together the stories of women and men who have been associated in some way or another with the project, Promoting Gender Equality for Decent Employment (GE4DE). In their own words they describe how they have used the opportunities provided under the project to promote gender equality in their workplaces and their households. These stories are by no means the only success stories of GE4DE. This selection merely represents the many women, men, girls and boys who have been influenced by the message of gender equality and have used the project to realise its spirit. The stories have been arranged in themes focusing on different aspects of their success. But at the core of all the stories is the simple message; gender equality is not just good for women, it is good for all.



International  
Labour  
Organization