Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund
Delivering Prosperity

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Empowering Communities through Vocational Training and Skill Development

PPAF has launched the "Economic Empowerment of Marginalised Communities through Vocational Training and Skill Development" project to enhance economic resilience and social inclusion. The initiative will equip 500 individuals including women, youth, and minorities from 13 districts in Sindh and Punjab with industry-relevant skills, helping them build sustainable livelihoods.

Funded by PPAF and implemented by its partner organisation, The Hunar Foundation (THF), the project offers courses in technical and mechanical skills, healthcare, IT and digital skills, and creative and service-based trades.

To mark the project's launch, THF and PPAF hosted a ceremony in Rawalpindi, attended by Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Dr. Ahsan Iqbal, who highlighted the importance of public-private collaboration for inclusive economic growth. Welcoming the guests, THF CEO Mr.Tahir Jawaid emphasised the initiative as a collective effort to address socio-economic disparities, creating opportunities for lasting change. PPAF CEO Mr. Nadir Gul Barech while addressing the audience highlighted that empowering 500 individuals means uplifting families, strengthening communities, and driving broader social impact.

A key highlight of the launch was the participation of representatives from diverse faiths, who shared their reflections, emphasising Pakistan's strength in unity and diversity.









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GRASP Strengthening Local Businesses



GRASP started the year with a renewed commitment to strengthening small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and promoting trade. A key milestone in Sindh's industrial landscape was the inauguration of Perfect Food Industries' (PFI) vacuum chamber and dehydration unit, made possible through a matching grant of PKR 30 million under GRASP, an EU-funded initiative implemented by ITC in partnership with PPAF, SMEDA, and FAO.

As a pioneer in fruit and vegetable dehydration, PFI has integrated cutting-edge technology to process onions and tomatoes, significantly increasing its capacity while reducing wastage and enhancing the value of processed products. The addition of new unit in the factory will also create more job opportunities for local communities.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by key stakeholders, including Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman, Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Mr. Rizwan Tariq, Provincial Lead, Sindh International Trade Centre, Mr. Nadir Gul Barech, CEO, PPAF, Mr. Suleman G. Abro, Founder, President – SAFCO Microfinance Company and representatives from the government, INGOs, the chamber of commerce, media, and local SMEs. Speaking at the event, Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan praised GRASP's role in supporting rural businesses, emphasising its impact on economic growth. He encouraged young entrepreneurs to take inspiration from success stories like PFI and step forward with confidence.





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PPAF and PTCL Group Celebrate Women Empowerment and Success

PPAF and PTCL Group recently celebrated the success of the Ba-Ikhtiar project, a groundbreaking initiative promoting financial independence for women entrepreneurs in Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This collaborative effort empowered talented women with limited opportunities by equipping them with the skills and resources needed to thrive in digital commerce.

Through PPAF and its implementing partner NRSP, participants received government certified training and career counselling to enhance their embroidery and tailoring skills. PTCL and Ufone 4G further strengthened their journey by providing smartphones and access to the Daraz Online Shopping platform, enabling them to sell directly to customers and access global markets.

The celebration event in Islamabad was graced by His Excellency, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi, UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, alongside corporate partners, development sector leaders, academia, and renowned figures from entertainment, fashion, and sports. A thought-provoking panel discussion explored global best practices in women empowerment, the role of technology in addressing societal challenges, and strategies for female entrepreneurs.

Mr. Hatem Bamatraf, President & Group CEO of PTCL & Ufone 4G, and Mr. Nadir Gul Barech, CEO, PPAF, highlighted the project's impact. The event also showcased inspiring success stories, including two participants who represented Pakistan at Gitex Global 2024 in Dubai, one of the world's premier tech events.











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Promoting Gandhara Civilisation and Heritage for Sustainable Eco-Tourism



In its commitment to foster culture and promote eco-tourism PPAF has launched a 24 month long Promoting Gandhara's Civilisation & Heritage for Sustainable Eco-Tourism project to be implemented through its partner organisation Kurram Welfare Home (KWH). With a financial outlay of PKR 60 million, this initiative aims to safeguard Taxila's rich cultural heritage while fostering sustainable economic opportunities for local communities.

The project is designed to integrate heritage conservation with economic growth by focusing on artisan skill development, digital marketing training, eco-tourism promotion, capacity building, and infrastructure improvements in Taxila, a world heritage site known for its Buddhist archaeological significance. By providing artisans with training, resources, and access to markets, the initiative seeks to revitalise traditional crafts, empower women entrepreneurs, and enhance Taxila's position as a prime cultural tourism destination.

The official launch of the project took place at the Gandhara Festival, hosted by KWH at the Pakistan National Council of Arts. The event brought together prominent dignitaries, policymakers, and cultural advocates, including Parliamentary Secretary Ms. Farah Naz, PTDC Managing Director Rana Aftab, and Adviser for Culture and Heritage Mr. Kashif Irshad. As hosts of the event, PPAF CEO Nadir Gul Barech and KWH CEO Mohammad Kamran welcomed the guests and emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts in preserving Pakistan's cultural heritage and promoting sustainable tourism. The attendees collectively recognised the significance of the initiative and expressed their commitment to supporting its long-term success.







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Strengthening Women-Led Entrepreneurship in Sindh

PPAF is driving women's economic empowerment by fostering entrepreneurship and aligning policies for gender-focused initiatives. A team from PPAF recently visited Thatta, Mirpurkhas, Tando Allahyar, and Hyderabad, engaging with women entrepreneurs and key stakeholders.

During their visit, they attended three SheTrade sessions (A global initiative to connect women entrepreneurs with potential buyers, investors and partners to grow their business) —held in collaboration with RDF, SAFWCO, and TRDP—where they connected with ten women-led SMEs. These sessions showcased the impact of the EU-funded GRASP project, highlighting success stories at both individual and community levels.

The PPAF team also engaged with key government stakeholders, including representatives from the Planning and Development Department, the Special Advisor to the Chief Minister, and the Women Development Department – Sindh. The discussions focused on securing institutional backing for PPAF's upcoming women-led initiatives to drive economic empowerment.

To further strengthen market opportunities, the team also met with the President of the Women's Wing of the Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce reinforcing PPAF's commitment to bridging policy gaps, expanding market access, and ensuring sustainable support for women entrepreneurs across Pakistan.







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PPAF Launches Climate-Resilient Development Programme in AJK

Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) faces significant challenges, including poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, and disaster risks from floods and earthquakes. Poor infrastructure and reliance on unsustainable energy sources further strain the region, disproportionately affecting women and marginalised groups.

To address these issues, PPAF has launched the AJK Local Area Development Programme in partnership with BERD Foundation and Hamza Development Foundation. This initiative aims to build climate resilience, enhance livelihoods, and contribute to poverty alleviation in Neelum, Hattian Bala, and Haveli districts.

With a focus on climate-smart agriculture, disaster risk reduction, renewable energy, and vocational training, the programme will benefit around 7,000 households. The programme aligns with Pakistan's National Climate Change Policy and Vision 2025, promoting sustainable development through farmer training, skill development for youth and persons with disabilities, improved disaster management, and access to clean energy. The initiative also fosters awareness of human rights, strengthens community-government linkages, and supports women's empowerment by ensuring equal access to resources and economic opportunities.

The programme was officially launched in Muzaffarabad, AJK, with key government officials and dignitaries, including PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, the Commissioner of AJK, provincial ministers, the CEO Raza Foundation, and PPAF's leadership.







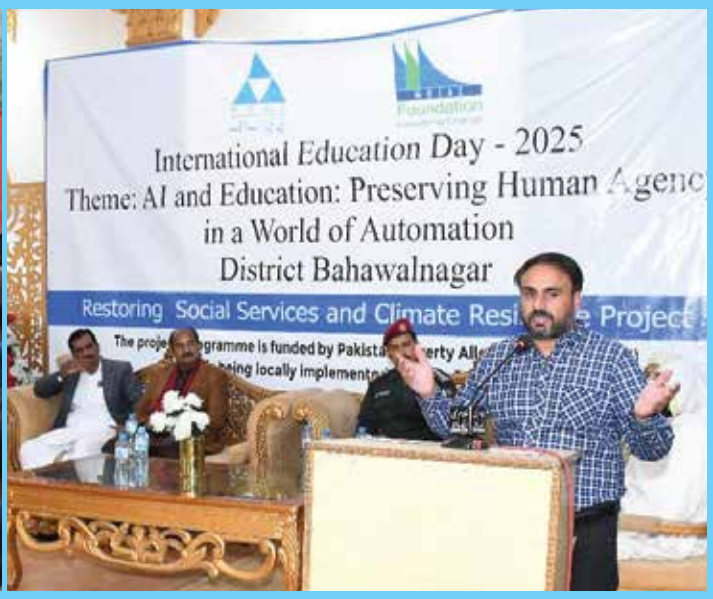


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Inspiring Change through Education





To mark the International Day of Education, PPAF partner organisations across Sindh, Punjab, and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) organised a series of activities, including seminars, walks, and speeches, emphasising the importance of education.

In Ghizer, GB, MIED-PPAF schools led an awareness walk on children's right to education, drawing over 150 participants, including students, teachers, and local leaders. In Sindh, PPAF-supported schools, in collaboration with IRC and Baanhn Beli, held events highlighting the significance of education. Meanwhile, in Punjab, the Mojaz Foundation hosted a seminar in Chistian, Bahawalnagar, focusing on the role of education and emerging technologies. The event was attended by members of the Provincial Assembly, academia, human rights activists, and legal professionals, with Mr. Atif Aurangzeb Matyana, Member of the Provincial Assembly Punjab, as the chief guest.

PPAF's education initiatives have positively impacted 432,800 students (44% girls) enrolled in 2,860 educational facilities—including 411 community schools, 1,500 public schools, and five tele-education facilities. Additionally, PPAF has extended support to 10,000 visually and hearing-impaired children with special education needs, ensuring inclusive learning opportunities for all.





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Stories From the Field

From Refugee to Entrepreneur

Abdul Aziz, a resident of the Timar Afghan Refugee Camp in Lower Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, situated near the Afghan border along the Panjkora River—comes from an underprivileged refugee family of 22 members. His father, a fruit seller in Timergara, was the sole breadwinner. Despite these challenges, Abdul Aziz remained deeply committed to his education. After completing his basic schooling, he earned a UNHCR-funded DAFI scholarship to pursue a bachelor's degree at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

His journey continued when he secured an internship through the same scholarship programme, training at Huzaifa Gems and Mineral Company. This experience sparked his interest in the field. Recognising his potential, he was later selected for PPAF's UNHCR-funded Poverty Graduation Programme (PGP) for DAFI scholars. Led by PPAF and implemented through its local partner IDEA, the initiative provided entrepreneurial support through the National Incubation Center's Start-up Programme at NSTP and Entrepreneurship Skill Training at IM Sciences, Peshawar.

Abdul Aziz refined his entrepreneurial vision through this programme. Over four months at the Business Incubation Center-IM Sciences Peshawar, he gained expertise in market research, product design, branding, data analytics, and e-commerce. Mentorship sessions and industrial visits provided networking opportunities and industry insights. Upon completing the programme, he successfully secured PKR 400,000 in seed funding to launch The Gems Bank, an online wholesale store offering high-quality, ethically sourced gemstones, crystals, and 925-grade sterling silver. He also opened a physical shop in Peshawar and an online Etsy store.

Now the primary breadwinner, Abdul Aziz supports his family as his father can no longer work. He is also training his brothers to join the business. This life-changing opportunity has not only helped him realise his dreams but also enabled him to contribute to Pakistan's growing e-commerce sector.

The PPAF's PGP for Afghan Refugees, funded by UNHCR Pakistan has successfully completed five phases, positively impacting over 10,000 families through livelihoods support, asset provision, and skills training.





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Stories From the Field

Sajida's Journey to Financial Independence

Sajida Parveen, a resident of 33 Mor Kot Chhutta, Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, once struggled to support her five children alongside her husband, a daily wage laborer. With no additional income, the family faced constant financial hardship and lived in a joint family set-up as they could not afford their own home.

Her life took a positive turn when she accessed the Prime Minister's Interest-Free Loan (PMIFL) Programme led by PPAF and implemented in the district by one of its local partner organisation's the CSC Empowerment & Inclusion Programme (CEIP)

In September 2021, Sajida secured her first interest free loan of PKR. 20,000, purchasing a sewing machine to start a small tailoring business. Through hard work and dedication, her skills in hand embroidery and dressmaking began to generate income, enabling her to repay the loan within the agreed timeframe. Encouraged by her success, she applied for a second interest free loan of PKR 30,000 in August 2022. This allowed her to expand her business by opening a small shop in her home, where she sold beautifully hand-embroidered dresses, further improving her family's financial situation.

In October 2023, Sajida took a third interest free loan of PKR 35,000 to scale up her operations, significantly boosting her income and securing a stable future for her family. Her growing business enabled her to move into a separate home, improve their living conditions, and enroll her children in school.

Sajida now proudly acknowledges the role of the PMIFL programme in her transformation. "As a wife, my importance has grown in my family because I am now an earning member too," she says. Her journey is an inspiring example of resilience, hard work, and the life-changing potential of financial empowerment.





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Stories From the Field

Transforming Lives Through Community-Based Health Interventions

In the remote village of Spara, UC Omza Vialla, district Zhob, a young mother struggled with restless nights as her 7-month-old daughter, Malaika, suffered from persistent crying, sleeplessness, and weakening health. Desperate for a solution, she and her mother-in-law attended a community health session facilitated under the Integrated Project for Community-Based Health and Nutrition Interventions in the marginalised districts of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa —a joint initiative of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and Nutrition International being implemented in Zhob by PPAF partner organisation, Balochistan Rural Support Programme.

At the session, a Community Mobiliser (CM) trained under the project carefully assessed Malaika's condition. She identified that the mother's poor diet was affecting her milk supply, leading to malnutrition for both mother and child. The CM educated the mother on the importance of a nutritious diet, advising her to consume fresh fruits, drink more water, especially before nursing—and incorporate milk into her meals. She also emphasised the benefits of breastfeeding over formula milk, explaining how it not only provides essential nutrients but also protects infants from infections. With support from her mother-in-law, the young mother committed to following this guide.

Within a month, the impact was clear. The mother's health improved, her ability to breastfeed increased, and Malaika became stronger, cried less, and even began eating soft foods. This transformation did not just benefit one family, it became an inspiration for other mothers in the village, demonstrating how simple, community-driven interventions can significantly improve maternal and child health.

Through the collaborative efforts of PPAF and NI, and the dedicated implementation by BRSP, this initiative is empowering vulnerable communities with life-saving health and nutrition education, one family at a time.



