



Empowering Youth for Work

An Avenue for Youth Economic Empowerment

In the current times, Pakistan has more young people than it ever had i.e., more than 60 per cent of the population in Pakistan is under 30 years of age, and 29 per cent of the nation is youth (age group of 15-29 years). This is forecasted to increase continuously till 2050 at least.

Youth is considered as the engine of development and has the power to transform the future of any country. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, youth is facing daunting challenges including poverty, unemployment, hopelessness, frustration and lack of opportunities to showcase their talents and unleash their potential. Unemployment is increasing day by day as more fresh graduates are coming out in the market with degrees and expectations of decent jobs. However, to their sheer disappointment, decent jobs are a rarity in a market where they cannot or hardly find an ordinary job.

Owing to these conditions, it is a dire need of the time to empower youth and provide them a clear direction for future so they would be able to play their role in the development and transformation of the society. For this purpose, Oxfam started an initiative named "Empower Youth for Work (EYW)". Empower Youth for Work (EYW) is a 5 years' project that aims to work towards poverty reduction, youth empowerment (especially empowerment of young girls) and gender equality. The project

is working for improved economic and social empowerment for young women and men living in rural climate-change affected areas. The project facilitates in implementation of effective policies and practices that address the economic and gendered exclusion of youth and lead to productive and decent employment prospects for young people.

Under this project, RDF (the implementing partner of Oxfam) hired services of ECI for capacity-building of Youth Leaders in Jamshoro on Microenterprises. Small scale businesses provide employment and income generation opportunities for low-income groups. Besides, these also provide a very healthy environment for entrepreneurial initiatives and hence, decrease poverty and unemployment by engaging young entrepreneurs.



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ECI conducted two-day Training of Trainers (ToTs) for 51 innovators including 33 females and 18 males. These innovators later trained 454 Youth Group Members (YMGs) of Jamshoro on the concepts of Enterprise Development by conducting twenty-four 2-day replication trainings.

For these trainings, ECI developed curriculum including handbook, training manual, and handouts to translate complex concepts of enterprise development into easily understandable illustrations. Different concepts of enterprise development such as introduction and types of business, identification and selection of business, concepts of market and marketing, personal entrepreneurial competencies, business mapping and planning etc were explained to the youth through role-plays, mock sessions, hot seat, storytelling and other creative ways to enhance their learning.

The replication trainings conducted by innovators were fully monitored and mentored by ECI's facilitators. Trainers provided mentoring support to the innovators which helped them evolve as trainers and empower the youth at the grassroots level. Trainers evaluated and ranked the performances of innovators as trainers and provided them with feedback to conduct training sessions more effectively.

The most remarkable achievement is that these trainings proved to be building blocks for the economic empowerment of the youth of Jamshoro. As innovators were trained in a way that they became confident enough to come forward and train the YMGs in the community as local trainers. Moreover, the majority of the innovators were young women (33 out of 51 were female) who were empowered to conduct capacity-building sessions for youth in the community. Above all, many young



participants stated they their confusions and apprehensions regarding entrepreneurship and small-scale businesses are cleared and now they are motivated to start their own business for self-sufficiency and sustainable economic development of the society.

It is important to build the capacities of rural youth through such programs regularly because these trainings are vital in empowering youth and providing them learning opportunities, guidance and direction for future. Also, there is a need for strong follow up and formal monitoring mechanisms to be set in place so that the learning from this project results in sustainable outcomes of youth economic empowerment in the near future.



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