



ILLUME

APRIL - JUNE 2023



Editor's Note

In this issue, we reflect on HRDN's steadfast commitment to empowerment, progress, and engagement as shared by our CEO, Robeela Bangash. Her message underscores the vital role of community-driven initiatives that not only address immediate needs but also foster long-term resilience. Through our focused programs, we aim to empower individuals by valuing every voice and fostering active participation, particularly among marginalized groups. This approach is central to creating sustained progress, ensuring that each step forward is rooted in collective strength and a shared vision for a more inclusive and equitable future.



CEO MESSAGE

At HRDN, we are committed to fostering an environment where empowerment, progress, and engagement drive meaningful change. In our journey, we have witnessed the strength that arises when individuals and communities are empowered with knowledge, skills, and opportunities. Our initiatives are not just programs; they are catalysts for transformation that inspire self-reliance and resilience.

Empowerment for us means creating spaces where every voice is valued, particularly those often unheard. Through our projects and partnerships, we strive to provide resources and platforms that enable individuals—especially women, youth, and marginalized groups—to become agents of change in their own lives and communities. Our focus on capacity-building, education, and community engagement ensures that progress is not only achieved but also sustained.

This year, our teams have worked tirelessly to deliver impactful programs across various sectors, from health and education to livelihood and skill development. We've expanded our outreach, strengthened collaborations, and continuously innovated our approaches to respond to the unique challenges faced by the communities we serve. Progress is a path, and every milestone reaffirms our belief in the power of collective effort.

Engagement is the heart of our mission. We believe that change is most effective when people are not just beneficiaries but active participants in shaping their futures. Together with our partners and community members, we are building a future where empowered individuals and communities thrive. This journey requires dedication, empathy, and an unwavering commitment to inclusivity and equity.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our shared vision. Together, we are not just making progress; we are shaping a future rooted in empowerment and sustained by collective engagement.

Robeela Bangash

WOMEN VOICES & LEADERSHIP (WVL) PROJECT

The Women Voices & Leadership (WVL) Project, dedicated to empowering women leaders across Pakistan, was initially scheduled to conclude in March 2023. However, recognizing the project's significant impact on advancing gender equality and leadership, HRDN secured a one-year extension. This extension provides us with invaluable time to deepen our commitment to fostering leadership opportunities for women and furthering gender equality initiatives across the country.

HRDN has been actively pursuing partnerships and funding to expand our reach and impact. Over the past year, we submitted ten grant applications to prominent international organizations, including IFES, the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, and the European Commission. Our She Leads-Ham Qadam and PAVE - Elections Without Violence projects received positive feedback from IFES, with discussions underway to finalize project details. Additionally, the European Commission's acceptance of our concept note, "Strengthening Media Freedom, Digital Resilience, and Advocacy for Human Rights in Pakistan," marks a pivotal advancement in our advocacy efforts and commitment to addressing critical human rights issues.

In June, the HRDN Board reviewed and approved the FY 2023-24 budget with a strategic focus on our mission-aligned priorities. This budgetary alignment ensures we have the necessary resources to effectively support our projects and sustain our efforts in driving social change and empowering communities across Pakistan. HRDN remains dedicated to empowering voices, fostering leadership, and building a more inclusive and equitable future for all.



Coordination & Outreach Initiatives

Economic Development in Disability Legislation Seminar

On April 5, 2023, HRDN, in partnership with the Potohar Mental Health Association (PMHA), hosted a seminar at COMSATS University on “Economic Development in Disability Legislation.” Led by Mr. Zulqarnain Asghar of PMHA, the event emphasized the need for inclusive legislation that fosters economic opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Attended by policymakers, students, and disability rights advocates, the seminar encouraged essential discussions on creating legislative reforms that promote an inclusive economy.

Gender and Power in Digital Spaces Seminar

On May 24, 2023, HRDN, in collaboration with COMSATS University, hosted a seminar led by Dr. Shahla Tabassum from Fatima Jinnah Women University. The session, titled “Gender and Power in Digital Spaces,” explored whether digital platforms genuinely advance gender equality or reinforce existing power structures. The event brought together students, academics, and digital rights advocates to discuss the pathways toward achieving gender equity in the digital age.



Participation in Google Launch

On May 9, 2023, HRDN joined the Institute of Rural Management (IRM) for the launch of a Google initiative focused on promoting digital literacy and entrepreneurship in rural Pakistan. The event included presentations on digital tools, success stories from rural entrepreneurs, and discussions on expanding digital access in underserved areas. HRDN's participation underscored its dedication to using technology as a catalyst for inclusive community development.



Strategic Meetings with COMSATS and ECI

On May 14, 2023, HRDN held a strategic meeting with COMSATS University to discuss potential collaborations in research, training, and community development. This meeting resulted in a commitment to jointly pursue projects advancing education, innovation, and sustainable growth.

On May 24, 2023, HRDN met with representatives from the Election Commission of India (ECI) to explore joint initiatives supporting democratic governance and transparent electoral processes. These discussions led to an MoU, scheduled for signing on June 22, 2023, to formalize collaborative efforts.



World Environment Day with ISF

In partnership with the International Sustainability Foundation (ISF), HRDN celebrated World Environment Day on June 5, 2023, in Islamabad. The event featured a keynote speech by HRDN's Chairperson, Dr. Roomi S. Hayat, emphasizing environmental sustainability as vital to national development. Activities included tree planting and educational sessions on environmental conservation, fostering a collective commitment to sustainable practices.



Gender, Inclusion, and Disability Working Group at ECP

On June 7, 2023, HRDN participated in a Working Group meeting organized by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The meeting focused on enhancing inclusivity within Pakistan's electoral framework, with stakeholders discussing policies to make voting more accessible for marginalized groups. HRDN's recommendations underscored its commitment to supporting an inclusive democratic process, fostering equitable representation, and promoting civic engagement.



Key Meetings with UNDP Representatives

HRDN held important discussions with UNDP representatives, including Mary Cummins, Chief Technical Advisor for the SELP initiative, and Ammara Durrani, Chief of Development Policy. These meetings explored joint efforts to strengthen electoral and legislative processes and address key development challenges by leveraging UNDP's expertise.



Training Programs

Gender Leadership through a Gender Lens

In collaboration with Oxfam Pakistan, HRDN hosted a five-day Gender Leadership training from May 8 to 12, 2023, in Lahore. Targeting alliances and Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), this program equipped participants with skills to lead gender-responsive initiatives and advocate for gender equity.



Islamic Banking and Finance Course

From May 30 to June 1, 2023, HRDN organized a three-day course on Islamic Banking and Finance. Participants from the banking, finance, and academic sectors attended sessions on core principles of Islamic finance, Shariah-compliant financial products, and industry trends. The training received positive feedback for its in-depth insights, supporting professionals in a rapidly evolving sector



Future Activities

- Summer internship
- Seminar on unveiling wonder ,aspects of tourism in pakistan
- Plantation for Pakistan drive
- Mid term review-
- 109 BOD

Join Us in Making a Difference

HRDN is dedicated to creating sustainable change through strategic initiatives and partnerships. We invite you to join us in our mission to empower women, engage youth, and promote sustainable development.

For more information on our activities and how you can get involved, please visit our website at www.hrdn.org.

Thank you for being a part of the HRDN community. Together, we are shaping a brighter future.

Sincerely,

The HRDN Team

Connect with Us:

- Website: www.hrdn.net
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