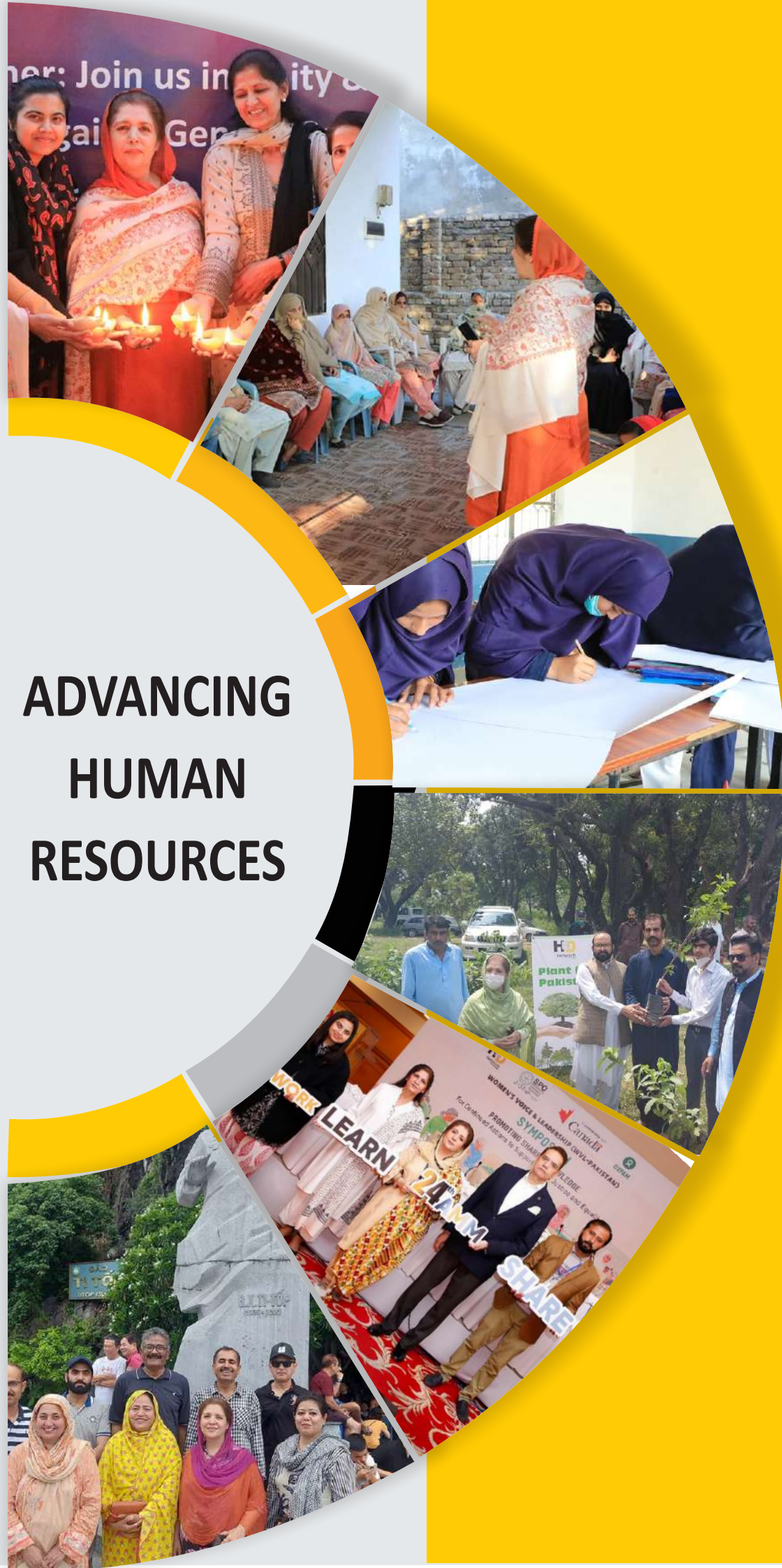


ADVANCING  
HUMAN  
RESOURCES

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024





# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

## DISCLAIMER:

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## ACRONYMS

Aga Khan Foundation	AKF
Baluchistan Rural Support Programme	BRSP
Canadian Dollar	CAD
Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Climate Risk Management	CRM
Community Resource Persons	CRPs
COMSATS	COMSATS University
Gender Leadership Program	GLP
Gender-Based Violence	GBV
Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara	GBTI
Gilgit Baltistan Rural Support Program	GBRSP
Global Affairs Canada	GAC
Human Resource Development Network	HRDN
Information and Communications Technology	ICT
Information, Education, and Communication	IEC
Institute of Rural Management	IRM
International Islamic University Islamabad	IIUI
International Labor Organization	(ILO)
Jamaat-e-Islami	JI
Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam	JUI
Membership Acceptance Committee	MAC
Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises	MSMEs
Microfinance and Enterprise Development Programme	MEDP
Muttahida Qaumi Movement	MQM
Muslim-HANDS	MH
National Center for Rural Development	NCRD
National Rural Support Programme	NRSP
Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz	PML-N
Pakistan People’s Party	PPP
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	PTI
Qaumi Watan Party	QWP
Rural Support Programmes Network	RSPN

Sarhad Rural Support Programme	SRSP
Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan	SECP
Sindh Peoples Housing for Flood-Affected Project	SPHF
Sindh Rural Support Organization	SRSO
Sustainable Development Goal	SDG
Taraqi Foundation	TF
Ultimate Beneficial Ownership	UBO
United Nations Development Program	UNDP
Women's Environmental and Social Solutions	WESS
Women's Rights Organizations	WROs
Women's Voice and Leadership-Pakistan	WVL-Pakistan



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear HRDN Members and Partners,

It is with great pride that I present the Annual Report 2023-2024, reflecting HRDN's unwavering commitment to knowledge sharing, capacity building, and community resilience. This year, we advanced gender equality, climate action, and inclusive governance while aligning our efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

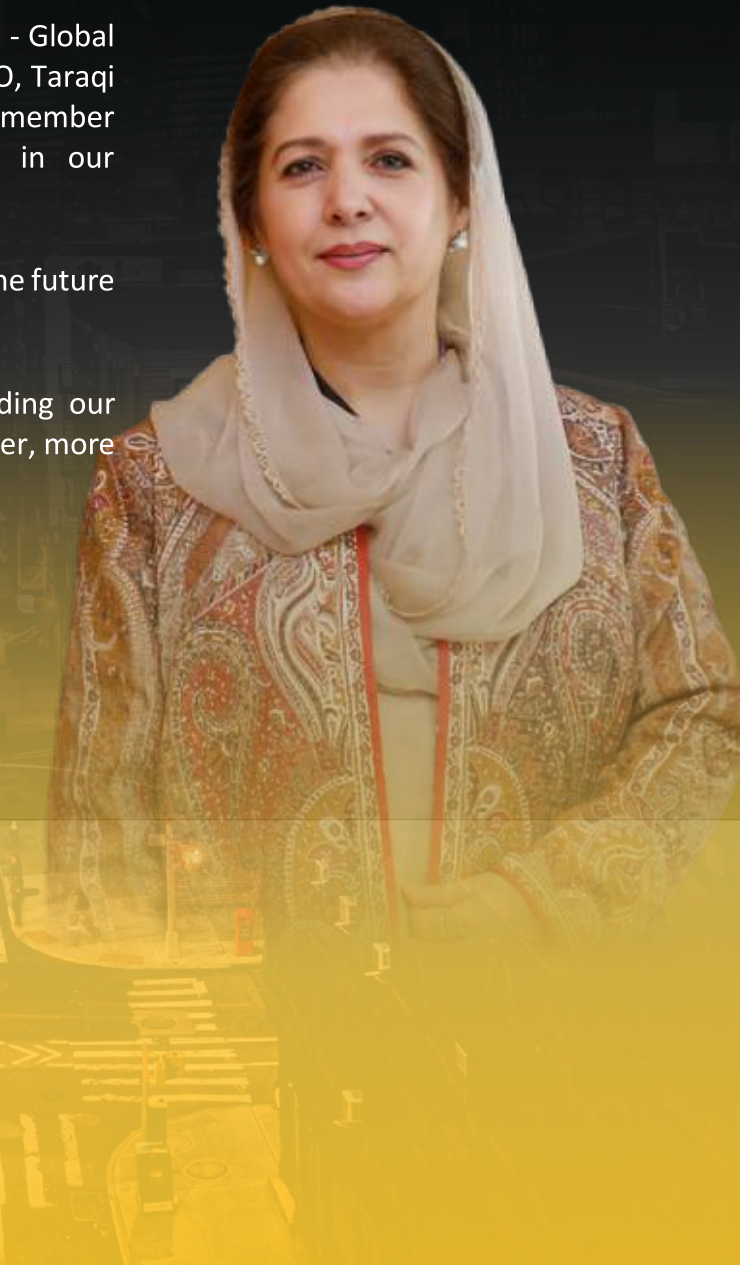
Despite challenges, HRDN successfully executed key initiatives, including two Annual Trainers' Retreats (ATRs), impactful advocacy, and strategic collaborations that transformed grassroots insights into actionable policies. As the National Secretariat for the Women's Voice and Leadership Pakistan (WVL-P) Program, we championed gender equity and mobilized collective action against gender-based violence (GBV). Our environmental sustainability initiatives, such as the Plant for Pakistan Drive, reinforced our commitment to a greener future.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our partners—Oxfam - Global Affairs Canada (GAC), GBRSP, IRM, NRSP, GBTI, SRSP, SRSO, Taraqi Foundation, HANDS, BRSP, Muslim HANDS, and our valued member organizations—whose support has been instrumental in our success.

"Our true impact lies not in what we have achieved but in the future we continue to build."

We look forward to strengthening partnerships, expanding our reach, and driving meaningful change. Let's shape a brighter, more sustainable future together.

With gratitude,



## CORE/ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

HRDN's core activities are designed around its slogan "**Network, Learn, Share and Grow**". The main annual activities since the inception of Network include Annual Members' Meeting, Annual Trainers' Retreat, Exposure Visits, Customized Training Programs, Networking Events, Conferences, Seminars, Webinars, Publications and so on.

HRDN's initiatives and projects are designed in a way that contributes to multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, some SDGs are more commonly addressed/related than others. As part of its ongoing efforts in networking, coordination, and outreach, HRDN advocates for the sustainable development agenda and ensures that civil society voices are integral to the national discourse. Follows is a brief description of SDGs incorporated into HRDN activities:

**SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING** is one of the key SDGs incorporated into most activities. Target 3.4, which promotes mental health and well-being, is also integrated into various initiatives.

**SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION** is a significant focus in HRDN's seminars, training sessions, retreats, and visits. It directly contributes to Target 4.7, which promotes education for sustainable development, global citizenship, and gender equality.

**SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY** is addressed by tackling systemic barriers to gender diversity in leadership and advocating for women's equal participation in decision-making (Target 5.5). HRDN's focus on women's leadership and empowerment aligns with Target 5.1, which aims to eliminate discrimination against women and girls.

**SDG 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH** is reinforced through activities and discussions on fostering inclusive economic development and productive employment, supporting Target 8.5. HRDN's commitment to women's leadership and political participation contributes to reducing inequalities in education, governance, and society. Some activities are also aligned with Target 8.9, which promotes sustainable tourism as a driver of economic growth.

**SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES** is a central theme in many activities and projects, emphasizing equitable access to entrepreneurial opportunities for marginalized groups (Target 10.2).

***SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION** is cross cutting in almost all activities and initiatives however more focus is on Target 13.1 (strengthening resilience to climate- related hazards) and Target 13.3 (raising awareness and building capacity for climate change mitigation).*

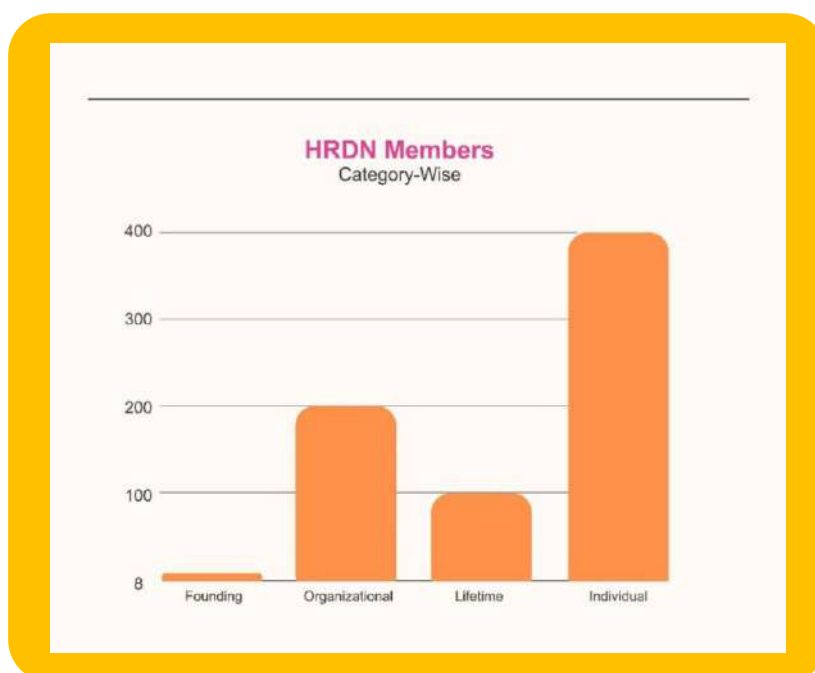
***SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS**, particularly Target 16.7, which advocates for responsive and participatory decision-making, is incorporated into initiatives and activities.*

***SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS** is a core component of HRDN's mission, as it creates opportunities for multi-stakeholder collaboration, bringing together government entities, academia, civil society, and the private sector.*

## HRDN MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

### **Committed to Creating Impact, Empowerment, Insight, and Connection**

The HRDN Membership Drive is an essential annual activity, where both individual and organizational members renew their commitment to a common cause. This drive reflects the belief in HRDN's mission to empower, inspire, and build sustainable development across communities. Being a member of HRDN means more than just joining an organization, it's about aligning with a collective vision for creating impactful change. Potential members apply to the secretariat, where quarterly meetings of the Membership Acceptance Committee (MAC) are held. After thorough scrutiny, the MAC, a three-member committee consisting of HRDN volunteers and Lifetime Members, ensures that every applicant is given a fair chance of becoming an HRDN member. Membership forms are available online. Membership is offered in three categories: 1) Organizational Members, 2) Individual Members (Professional Members, General Members, Lifetime Members and 3) of course Student Members.



Membership enables members to interact with a vibrant community of development professionals, creating an environment for continuous learning, sharing, and growth. Through HRDN, members gain opportunities to benchmark themselves against industry leaders, foster meaningful collaborations, and benefit from insights and inspiration from others in the field. Thematic Discussions of Experts, Networking Events, and exclusive gatherings provide a platform to connect with like-minded individuals and organizations, ensuring both personal and professional development.

HRDN members also enjoy robust networking opportunities with top development professionals, donor agencies, and key stakeholders across the public and private sectors. As a member, you become part of a rich knowledge body, connecting with experts across various disciplines to address complex development challenges with confidence. Members are also given exposure at significant forums such

as the International ATR Conference and the Pakistan Development Expo, providing ample opportunities for recognition, contribution, and leadership within the sector.

At the core of HRDN's mission is capacity building. We provide our members with specialized training opportunities, access to expert trainers, and national-level resources, helping them stay informed about best practices and enhance their skills. Members can access training at subsidized rates, and organizations can hire HRDN's expert trainers at discounted prices. The HRDN Digital Resource Centre and National Trainers' Database are invaluable tools that support the continuous growth of our members and their organizations.

Since its establishment, HRDN has empowered its members to overcome challenges, stay ahead of industry trends, and develop initiatives that drive lasting impact. The collective contributions of our members and partners (Action Aid, Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), OXFAM-GAC, GIZ, International Labor Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), USAID, and the US Embassy) make HRDN a true catalyst for sustainable progress. We are proud to have a community of members who are genuinely committed to improving the lives of individuals and communities across Pakistan. As we continue to grow, the role of our members remains central to our shared success in creating a just and equitable society.

## ALL MEMBERS' MEETING (AMM)

The AMM of HRDN is more than just a meeting, it is a testament to the power of collective action, bringing together thinkers, policymakers, and practitioners under one roof with a shared commitment to a cause that goes beyond the ordinary. Since its inception, this annual gathering has been a cornerstone of HRDN's efforts, driving practical actions and strategic direction for the year ahead. It is a platform where the voices of those who dare to envision change are heard and where the future is shaped through policy-driven dialogues.

### **24<sup>th</sup> AMM - Continued Actions for Promoting Gender Justice in Pakistan**

On December 28, 2023, the 24<sup>th</sup> AMM was held at the Marriott Hotel, Islamabad, stood as a powerful reflection of this tradition. With the theme *"Continued Actions for Promoting Gender Justice in Pakistan,"* this year's meeting attracted a dynamic group of 50 professionals from the public, private, and development sectors.

HRDN's CEO, Ms. Robeela Bangash, kicked off the proceedings with a compelling overview of the network's journey over the past 24 years, highlighting its pivotal role in advocating for gender justice

and sustainable development. Her words set the stage for the pivotal discussions that followed discussions centered on action, empowerment, and justice for women across Pakistan.

A high-powered panel discussion, chaired by Mr. Zafrullah Khan, CEO of Vision 2047, brought to light the urgent need for enhancing women's participation in both political and social spheres. The panelists not only discussed the barriers women face but also proposed concrete solutions for overcoming those challenges.

Mr. Ali Kemal Chief SDG Unit- Ministry of Planning & Development Pakistan passionately advocating for policy reforms that promote shared household responsibilities, aligning with the SDG Goal 5 of achieving gender equality. The panel also underscored the importance of dismantling the cultural, economic, and healthcare barriers that women continue to face, while stressing the need for equitable education access, stronger legal frameworks, and improved healthcare provisions for women and girls.

As the event reached its conclusion, HRDN expressed heartfelt gratitude to all members and participants for their unwavering dedication to the cause of gender justice.

The 24<sup>th</sup> AMM served as a powerful affirmation of HRDN's role in shaping Pakistan's gender justice landscape and an invitation to all present to continue this journey with resolve and purpose, until the work is done.





## SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### Empowering the Leaders of Tomorrow-Advancing SDGs

HRDN's Summer Internship Program is not just an annual program; this program is a testament to HRDN's unwavering faith in youth empowerment and its commitment to shaping the future of development. From July to September 2024, HRDN opened its doors to 20 exceptional university students from prestigious institutions like Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), COMSATS University, International Islamic University Islamabad (IUI), and the University of Humanities and Sciences. Every year, HRDN crafts an experience that is not merely about internships but about nurturing tomorrow's leaders and change makers.



This year, the internship was a carefully curated journey into the world of professional excellence, where each participant was molded by world-class expertise. A two-day training session covered critical areas such as Good Practices, Content Writing, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Material Development, Event Management, Research Methodology, and Office Management. These modules were selected not just to provide theoretical knowledge but also to equip interns with tangible skills that could change their trajectory and leave a mark on their careers.



Dr. Roomi S. Hayat and Mr. Manzoor Khaliq, ILO, champions of rural development and gender justice, shared their valuable experiences. Under their mentorship, interns didn't just learn they transformed, acquiring knowledge that would serve them for a lifetime. The training was interactive and immersive, ensuring that every intern walked away with hands-on experience that was directly applicable to the real world.



HRDN's commitment didn't stop at training. The interns were thrust into the heart of the organization, contributing to live projects that made an actual impact. One of the highlights was the Plantation Drive, where interns didn't just witness change, they became catalysts for it, applying their newly acquired skills to an environmental cause that resonated with HRDN's core mission. This wasn't just about learning; it was about doing, contributing, and evolving into leaders who understood the profound connection between human action and sustainable development.



As the program culminated, the interns took center stage, showcasing their journey through presentations assessed by top-tier professionals. Their work was not merely evaluated it was celebrated, as they demonstrated the growth they had undergone throughout the program.



The program significantly contributed to multiple SDGs by fostering education, employment, environmental responsibility, and collaboration

*Aligned with **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**, it provided inclusive and equitable learning opportunities beyond the classroom through training sessions and mentorship. Professional development was a key focus, as interns received mentorship from renowned experts, gaining valuable insights and guidance beyond conventional education. In support of **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**, the internship equipped young individuals with employable skills, preparing them for meaningful careers and contributing to economic development.*

*Addressing **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**, interns actively engaged in a Plantation Drive, promoting environmental stewardship and raising awareness about climate change. Furthermore, the program embodied the essence of **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)** by collaborating with academic institutions, experts, and interns, reinforcing the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in achieving sustainable development*

The HRDN Summer Internship Program had a profound impact on youth empowerment by equipping 20 university students with essential professional skills, transforming them into future leaders and change-makers. Through real-world engagement, interns actively participated in live projects, bridging the gap between theoretical learning and meaningful action. The program also emphasized environmental responsibility by involving interns in a Plantation Drive, reinforcing HRDN's commitment to sustainability.

## ANNUAL TRAINERS' RETREAT (ATR)

### Bridging Nations: "The Entrepreneurial Connection for Peace in Kazakhstan and Pakistan"

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Trainers' Retreat (ATR) 2023, held from October 20<sup>th</sup> to October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in Almaty and Astana, Kazakhstan, centered around the theme "Unity in Innovation: Navigating the Landscape of Inclusive Entrepreneurial Ecosystems." 22<sup>nd</sup> ATR was a combination of one-day conference and cultural exchange, sightseeing, shopping and relaxation offering participants a well-grounded experience.



The retreat brought together 13 participants from various international organizations, providing a platform to discuss the importance of inclusivity and diversity within entrepreneurial ecosystems.



The weather during the retreat was varied, with Astana experiencing chilly temperatures between 8°C during the day and -1°C at night, while Almaty offered milder conditions around 16°C. The retreat successfully combined professional development with cultural immersion, leaving participants with enhanced cross-cultural competence, knowledge of inclusive entrepreneurship, and the tools to drive positive change in their respective ecosystems. The experience not only fostered collaboration but also reinforced the importance of inclusivity in shaping the future of global entrepreneurship.

On **October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023**, a **one-day conference** titled "Bridging Nations: The Entrepreneurial Connection for Peace in Kazakhstan and Pakistan" was held at Astana-Kazakhstan. Participants engaged in discussions on **how entrepreneurship can contribute to peace, social harmony, and economic empowerment**, while also learning actionable strategies to **integrate peace-building principles into their training**.

## Fostering Inclusive Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

A key focus of the conference was on equipping trainers with tools to navigate diverse entrepreneurial landscapes, promoting collaboration, empathy, and ethical business practices. Participants explored ways to break down systemic barriers hindering access to opportunities, particularly for individuals from marginalized socio-economic backgrounds. These efforts aimed to create more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems.

## Enhancing Economic Growth Through Diversity

Discussions highlighted how diverse leadership, and inclusive practices drive to economic growth, innovation, and organizational resilience. The conference highlighted how fostering diversity in leadership can significantly boost economic growth, innovation, and resilience, with studies showing that companies with diverse leadership teams are **21% more likely** to outperform their competitors.



## Empowering Global Change-Makers

By uniting participants from international organizations, the ATR facilitated a knowledge exchange that empowered trainers to drive meaningful change in their entrepreneurial ecosystems.

## Promoting Peace and Social Harmony

Participants explored strategies to integrate peace-building principles into entrepreneurship, fostering social harmony and mitigating conflict through business innovation.

## Cultural Exchange and Cross-Cultural Competence

Cultural experiences in Kazakhstan enhanced participants' understanding of different perspectives, fostering mutual respect and collaboration across diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition to the conference sessions, the retreat offered participants a rich cultural experience, visiting iconic landmarks such as the Baiterek Tower, the Nur-Astana Mosque, and the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation. The journey also took them to Medeo, Shymbulak, and Issyk Lake, showcasing Kazakhstan's natural beauty and cultural heritage.



The retreat offered a blend of professional learning and cultural immersion, enabling participants to develop both technical expertise and interpersonal skills critical for driving inclusive growth

## Green Horizons- Empowering Women & Human Resources for Climate Action

Amid the growing climate crisis, the **Green Horizons Conference: Empowering Women and Human Resources for Climate Action** was held from **May 22-29, 2024, in Hanoi, Vietnam**, bringing together **13 key participants—leaders, innovators, and change-makers—to** address the critical intersection of **gender, climate resilience, and human resource development**. More than just a discussion, the **conference on May 26, 2024, in Ha Long Bay** was a **call to action**, emphasizing that women are **not bystanders but key drivers of change** in building a **resilient and sustainable future**.



**SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** Strengthening women's leadership in climate action and sustainable development.

**SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** Equipping professionals with climate-conscious HR strategies to foster sustainable economic growth.

**SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Advocating for the integration of climate

resilience policies in human resource frameworks.

**SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):** Enhancing global collaboration through engagement with **HRDN members, experts, and institutions.**

The event opened with a compelling statement from Mr. Sharif Khan, Chairperson of IEC, who declared, *"Women are the unsung heroes in the battle against climate change. To ensure a sustainable future, we must elevate their voices and empower them to lead the way."* This theme set the tone for the further discussions, which explored transformative solutions for combating climate change while championing the leadership of women at every level.

As the conference unfolded, the power of inclusive action became abundantly clear. Mr. Naseebullah, from WESS, shared impactful stories of women in Balochistan who pioneering climate resilience efforts are. Through training in agriculture, climate change education, and community mobilization, these women have become pillars of strength, leading their communities in adapting to the harsh realities of climate change.



Dr. Ghulam Rasool Samejo from SRSO shared an inspiring initiative, the Sindh Peoples Housing for Flood-Affected Project (SPHF). This initiative has empowered over 800,000 women, giving them access to climate-resilient housing, vocational training, and green initiatives. It was a powerful reminder that climate action is not just about surviving the crisis, but also about empowering women to thrive in the face of it.



The spotlight also turned to the role of the private sector, with Mr. Syed Sulaman Shah from SRSP urging businesses to integrate Climate Risk Management (CRM) into their operations. His call was simple but profound: *"Corporate responsibility is not optional; it is a duty we must all embrace to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come."*



Ms. Robeela Bangash, CEO, HRDN, addressed the concluding session of the conference. She rallied the participants with a passionate plea: *"We are at a crossroads. If we do not act now, the future of our planet is at risk. We must invest in women leadership, human resources, and climate resilience to secure a future of hope and opportunity for all."*

Her address set the stage for a series of policy recommendations, emphasizing the need informed gender-inclusive policies, investments in green job training, enhanced cross-sector collaboration, and the urgent promotion of women-led initiatives.

### **Catalyzing Women's Leadership in Climate Resilience**

The conference highlighted the indispensable role of women as leaders in tackling climate challenges, showcasing real-world examples of women-led initiatives like climate-resilient housing and community mobilization in vulnerable regions. This conference reaffirmed the truth: women and human resources are not just part of the climate solution; they are the solution.

### **Strengthening Climate-Smart Human Resources**

Discussions emphasized equipping individuals with skills for green jobs and climate risk management, creating a pipeline of human resources to lead sustainable development efforts.

### **Inspiring Cross-Sector Collaboration**

The event facilitated partnerships across public, private, and civil society sectors to foster collective action against climate change, ensuring more robust and inclusive strategies.

### **Driving Policy Innovation**

Participants proposed groundbreaking recommendations for gender-inclusive climate policies, green financing, and biodiversity conservation efforts, setting a precedent for future climate action agendas.

### **Empowering Marginalized Communities**

Success stories of community-level initiatives demonstrated how empowering women can uplift entire communities, turning them into resilient hubs capable of withstanding climate challenges.

### **Raising Global Awareness**

With key leaders advocating for urgent climate action, the conference amplified the global narrative on the critical need to integrate gender equality into climate resilience frameworks.

The conference concluded with an unyielding commitment to integrating climate risk management strategies and advancing disaster resilience efforts that prioritize sustainability and biodiversity conservation.



## NETWORKING

### A LEADING CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE IN NETWORKING, COORDINATION, AND OUTREACH

HRDN's commitment to advancing sustainable development and advocating for gender equality, youth empowerment, and climate action is evident through its active participation in key national and international platforms. As a representative of civil society, HRDN continues to play a pivotal role in networking, coordination, and outreach, collaborating with governments, organizations, and communities to drive meaningful change.



### Mid-Term Review 2023: Contributing to National SDG Progress

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, HRDN took part in the *Mid-Term Review 2023*, organized by Pakistan's SDG Unit under the Ministry of Planning and Development. The event provided an in-depth assessment of Pakistan's progress toward the achievement of the SDGs, while addressing the challenges and priorities for meeting the 2030 targets.

HRDN, a key player in sustainable development, actively contributed valuable insights from its ongoing projects, underscoring its commitment to fostering resilient communities, promoting capacity building, and strengthening public-private partnerships. The review focused on key SDG areas such as poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability issues that HRDN has consistently championed through its diverse initiatives.

## LEARNING

HRDN develops and organizes customized training events tailored to the specific needs and requirements of its members, ensuring that these initiatives are both relevant and effective. Training is design and delivered in a highly professional and interactive manner, recognizing that learning is a two-way process; one that thrives on collaboration and engagement.

### Training on EZ File & Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP)

On April 23, 2024, HRDN organized a one-day training session on **EZ File and SECP Compliance Updates** at the IRM Complex in response to requests from its member organizations registered under Section The event brought together 25 participants from 12 different organizations, providing them with an opportunity to expand their knowledge of SECP regulations and digital compliance tools. This initiative aimed to enhance organizational compliance capabilities, ensuring alignment with the latest SECP requirements. The training covered key topics, including filing updates and Ultimate Beneficial Ownership (UBO). Mr. Sibghatullah Ahsan, a Regulatory and Legal expert conducted the session.



## Objectives of the training:

- ❖ Familiarizing participants with recent SECP updates and regulatory changes.
- ❖ Providing hands-on experience with the **EZ File** system, a digital platform for corporate filings.
- ❖ Enhancing participants' understanding of SECP compliance protocols, with a focus on corporate governance, mandatory reporting, and filing obligations.

The session also addressed common compliance challenges, offering practical guidance on effectively navigating these issues. Participants engaged with the **EZ File** system, acquiring essential skills for efficient corporate filings and staying updated with regulatory developments.

The training directly contributed to **SDG 4: Quality Education**, specifically **Target 4.4**, which focuses on enhancing youth and adult skill sets for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship. By offering customized, practical training on SECP compliance, HRDN equipped participants with valuable skills essential to their professional roles.

This initiative also supported **SDG 8**, particularly **Target 8.3**, which encourages policies promoting the formalization and growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). By improving compliance and governance capacities, the training empowered businesses to meet regulatory standards and function effectively within the formal economy. Additionally, the emphasis on digital competencies aligned with **Target 8.2**, which focuses on enhancing productivity and technological capabilities.

A crucial aspect of the training was hands-on engagement with the EZ File system, a digital tool for corporate filings. By familiarizing participants with this platform, HRDN strengthened their digital literacy and technical skills, enabling them to manage corporate filings swiftly and accurately while reducing errors and delays. This aligns with **SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (Target 9.c)**, which promote ICT accessibility and technological capacity-building in developing countries.

**The session reinforced SDG 16, particularly Target 16.6, which calls for the development of effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. By enhancing participants' understanding of SECP compliance, HRDN contributed to corporate transparency, legal accountability, and stronger regulatory frameworks in Pakistan.**

The collaboration between HRDN and various organizations demonstrated the power of partnerships in achieving SDGs. By facilitating knowledge exchange and best practices, the session embodied **SDG 17**, which emphasizes multisectoral collaboration to address development challenges and promote sustainable growth.

Participants reported enhanced awareness of SECP regulations and expressed high satisfaction with the interactive and practical learning approach. The interactive nature of the training allowed participants to address compliance challenges in real-time and learn from each other's experiences. This collaborative learning environment deepened their understanding of SECP compliance complexities and provided practical solutions to navigate regulatory requirements efficiently. Many attendees recommended follow-up sessions to stay updated on evolving SECP regulations and best practices.

## Chronicle of Exploration: Gilgit Baltistan Rural Support Program (GBRSP), Board of Directors' Visit

A customized training programme was developed for the Board of Directors of GBRSP, including its chairman, advisors, and senior management. Training was designed to align with their organizational goals; the program connected them with top-tier experts and successful models in Pakistan's development sector.

### Enhanced Institutional Leadership and Governance

The tailored training program significantly strengthened the leadership capabilities of GBRSP's Board of Directors. By engaging with seasoned Development professionals. Dr. Rashid Bajwa (CEO, NRSP) shared NRSP's innovative journey, including tools like the *KisanKat* app and Mr. Umar Idrees (NRSP) provided insights into the Microfinance and Enterprise Development Programme (MEDP). Dr. Roomi Saeed Hayat (CEO, IRM), shared valuable insights into successful organizational models and the importance of effective CEO-Board relationships. Ms. Robeela Bangash (CEO, HRDN) underscored the journey of collaboration, networking, and growth. This knowledge empowered the board members to improve their strategic decision-making, enhance organizational governance, and foster more effective leadership.



**SDG 8 is Decent Work and Economic Growth** and this part of the training targeted **SDG 8.3**, which encourages the promotion of policies that foster the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). By strengthening institutional governance, compliance, and leadership within GBRSP, HRDN is helping the organization enhance its development initiatives, thereby contributing to job creation and economic empowerment in rural areas. Additionally, the focus on innovation and effective leadership will likely improve GBRSP's ability to foster economic growth within the communities they serve.

### Strengthened Compliance and Regulatory Practices

A key component of the training program was the workshop on SECP Rules and Regulations, led by Mr. Faisal Lateef Khawaja (Joint Registrar, SECP). This session provided participants with firsthand expertise on regulatory compliance, helping GBRSP's leadership better understand and navigate Pakistan's corporate governance landscape. As a result, the board members were equipped to improve compliance protocols within GBRSP, fostering a more transparent and accountable organizational culture. This component of the training aligned with **SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong**



**and Targeted 16.6**, which focuses on developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. The training on SECP Rules and Regulations helped GBRSP's leadership enhance its compliance practices, contributing to stronger, more transparent governance within the organization. This, in turn, supports the broader goal of building accountable and transparent institutions that promote justice and peace.

### **Empowered Rural Capacity Building Initiatives**

The visit to the National Center for Rural Development (NCRD) and interaction with its leadership-helped board members better appreciate the importance of rural development initiatives. Through this experience, GBRSP's leadership was exposed to effective models of rural capacity building, which will enable them to integrate similar strategies into their own development work. This exchange of knowledge is expected to have a direct impact on GBRSP's efforts to strengthen rural communities through targeted development programs.



### **Promoting Innovation and Institutional Growth**

The training emphasized the importance of innovation and continuous growth within institutions. The interactive discussions and expert-led sessions inspired GBRSP's leadership to embrace new approaches to problem solving and innovation. Participants were motivated to incorporate these fresh perspectives into their strategic planning, driving future growth and sustainability within their organization. By strengthening their capacity for innovation, GBRSP is better positioned to achieve long-term success and create a lasting impact in the development sector.

### **Cultural Exchange and Networking**

The cultural exchange and networking opportunities provided during the event allowed participants to build stronger relationships with experts in the development sector, as well as with other organizations. These interactions will serve as valuable resources for ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing, enhancing GBRSP's connections within the wider development community. The sessions were enriched with on-site visits and interactive discussions, culminating in a cultural exchange. GBRSP's Delegation honored HRDN's CEO, Ms. Robeela Bangash, with a traditional Cap (Khoi) as a token of appreciation. Participants praised the program's comprehensive design, expert facilitation, and immersive learning environment, leaving them motivated and equipped to drive institutional excellence.

Through the interactive and expert-led training, GBRSP's leadership was encouraged to adopt innovative practices that can strengthen their development initiatives, leading to greater infrastructure development in rural areas.



## SHARING

### EMPOWERING MINDS, TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Each event hosted by HRDN is more than just a gathering, it is an opportunity to spark change, share insights, and empower individuals to act. By bringing together experts, youth, academia, civil society, and government representatives, HRDN fosters knowledge exchange and collaboration, driving collective efforts toward social change.

HRDN's seminars serve as platforms for sharing ideas, building connections, and empowering individuals to make a lasting impact in their communities and beyond. As we move forward, HRDN remains committed to expanding opportunities for learning, growth, and collaboration, knowing that spreading knowledge paves the way for a brighter, more inclusive, and sustainable future. This year, we organized several seminars and webinars featuring prominent speakers on a range of topics.

#### Healing Circle: A Moment of respite in a world of pressure

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, the HRDN Secretariat hosted a seminar *"The Healing Circle"*, a transformative and deeply needed session designed to restore balance and foster emotional wellbeing.

Facilitated by the renowned therapist, Ms. Manizheh Bano, this session attracted 18 participants from some of the most prominent organizations, including the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), Institute of Rural Management (IRM), Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara (GBTI), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), and HRDN.

The session began with the setting of ground rules, ensuring an environment where privacy and trust were sacred, where vulnerability could thrive in a safe space. Participants were invited to share their personal experiences, to express emotions that had long been suppressed, and to seek guidance in their healing journey. As Ms. Bano guided them through reflective exercises and discussions, a sense of calm began to wash over the group, as the barriers of stress and anxiety slowly crumbled away.



#### Fostering Mental Health Awareness

The Healing Circle brought much-needed attention to the importance of mental health in professional and personal settings, breaking the stigma often associated with emotional well-being in workplaces. **Aligned with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)**, the initiative supported **Target 3.4 by promoting mental well-being** and helping participants manage stress and emotional challenges.

The Healing Circle made significant contributions to multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing mental health and emotional well-being in professional environments. Supporting **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**, the session equipped participants with essential tools and knowledge for emotional well-being, encouraging lifelong learning and self-improvement.

#### Emotional Resilience Building

Participants experienced an immediate sense of relief and rejuvenation, which contributed to their emotional resilience, enabling them to handle stress and pressure more effectively.

### Safe Space for Vulnerability

By creating a secure and non-judgmental environment, the Healing Circle allowed participants to express and process emotions, leading to greater self-awareness and personal growth.

### Promoting Holistic Well-Being

The initiative underscored the importance of addressing mental, emotional, and physical health as interconnected aspects of a balanced life. The impact of the Healing Circle was immediate and profound. Feedback from attendees spoke volumes: many felt rejuvenated, as though a weight had been lifted from their shoulders. Emotional release, self-awareness, and a deep sense of peace marked the session's success. It was a reminder that mental health is just as important as physical health, and in professional environments where pressure is constant, mental well-being must be prioritized. In connection with **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**, the program emphasized the importance of mental health in the workplace, fostering a more engaged, resilient, and productive workforce.

### Organizational Productivity

By focusing on mental health indirectly supported higher productivity and engagement among participants, as a healthier mind leads to better decision-making and efficiency.

The Healing Circle also contributed to **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)** by addressing the unique emotional pressures faced by individuals across genders, advocating for inclusive mental health initiatives. In alignment with **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**, the session ensured equal access to mental health support for participants from diverse backgrounds, emphasizing emotional well-being as a universal need. Additionally, the program demonstrated the power of collaboration under **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)**, as prominent organizations came together to promote holistic well-being and raise mental health awareness.

HRDN's *Healing Circle* initiative showed that sometimes, the most powerful action is to simply *stop*, breathe, and heal. This session was not just about finding relief, but about cultivating a deeper connection with us and each other. It was an invitation to all members of the HRDN community to take care of their emotional health, to honor their well-being, and to nurture the resilience that lies within.

## How Women's Participation Transforms Electoral Dynamics

On February 5, 2024, HRDN hosted an enlightening seminar led by Mr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ali, Country Director, Centre for Peace and Development, highlighting the transformative power of women's political participation. Aligned with **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)** and **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions)**, the session emphasized how inclusive electoral processes drive equitable policies and strengthen governance. Discussions addressed barriers such as cultural norms and limited resources, underscoring the need for an enabling environment to enhance women's political engagement. By advocating for gender-inclusive leadership and participatory governance, HRDN reinforced its commitment to breaking barriers and fostering democratic resilience in Pakistan.

## Pioneering Paths: Confidence and Resilience in Women's Journey to Success

On May 17, 2024, HRDN hosted an event that celebrated the resilience and confidence of women in overcoming societal barriers, aligning with **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)** and **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**. The seminar shared powerful stories of Malala Yousafzai and Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, showcasing how determination and self-belief can redefine success. By highlighting these narratives, HRDN empowered attendees to embrace challenges, transform adversity into opportunity, and break

barriers. The event reinforced that success is not defined by societal norms but by the courage to persist, inspiring over 200 students to pursue their ambitions and challenge gender disparities.

## Unveiling Wonders: Aspects of Tourism in Pakistan

On August 29, 2023, HRDN hosted the Unveiling Wonders seminar, featuring Dr. Moin Uddin, a seasoned strategist and sustainability expert with over two decades of experience in governance, strategic management, and partnership development. Currently serving as Corporate Director of HR&OD at Tourism Promotion Services (TPS), a subsidiary of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED), he oversees ESG, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility projects across South and Central Asia. Dr. Moin took participants on a journey through Pakistan's untapped tourism potential, aligning with **SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth)** and **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production)**. The event highlighted sustainable tourism as a driver of economic prosperity, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship. Experts discussed job creation, cultural exchange, and conservation strategies, addressing challenges like infrastructure gaps and marketing. The seminar inspired participants to reimagine Pakistan's tourism landscape, advocating for a more sustainable and globally competitive sector.



## Shattering the Glass Ceiling

As the Keynote Speaker at the Shattering the Glass Ceiling international conference, organized by IIUI from October 17-19, 2023, Robeela Bangash, CEO HRDN, delivered a compelling address on the systemic barriers women face in academic leadership. She emphasized that despite significant strides in education, women remain underrepresented in decision-making roles. Her keynote shed light on the pervasive issues of gender bias, pay gaps, and cyberbullying, advocating for the implementation of gender-responsive policies and mentorship programs. She highlighted HRDN's pivotal role in fostering institutional reforms, mentoring future women leaders, and promoting collaborative efforts between governments, NGOs, and universities to create pathways for women's leadership advancement. Aligned with **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)** and **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**, HRDN's contributions reinforced the need for inclusive policies that ensure women's representation at all levels of academia. The impact of this conference was clear: it planted the seeds for gender equity in academia, inspiring the next generation of women leaders to break barriers and lead with confidence.



## ILLUME

HRDN publishes a quarterly newsletter, ILLUME, which covers major news, events, activities, and key messages not only from HRDN but also from its members and member organizations. This publication serves as a platform to highlight achievements, share best practices, and foster collaboration within the network.

ILLUME is available online, ensuring wider accessibility for readers across various regions. By providing insightful updates, thought-provoking articles, and success stories, the newspaper plays a crucial role in keeping stakeholders informed and engaged in HRDN's initiatives and broader developmental efforts.

## GROWING

### STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR GROWTH

Collaborations with academic institutions are integral to fostering youth empowerment, professional development, and sustainable change. Through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), HRDN continues to build strong, strategic alliances that create long-lasting, impactful outcomes.

#### Memorandums of Understanding

On March 12, 2024, HRDN marked a significant step in its mission to empower youth by signing an MoU with FJWU, Chakri Campus. This partnership paves the way for a series of joint initiatives that will enhance the skills and employability of students, equipping them to excel in the development sector and beyond. The MoU outlines a collaborative framework for capacity building, where HRDN and FJWU will work together to offer workshops, training programs, and development opportunities. These initiatives will empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary for professional success, preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly evolving global landscape.



#### Capacity Building and Skills Development

The partnership focuses on offering comprehensive training that prepares students for both academic and professional challenges. HRDN will facilitate joint workshops and seminars where FJWU students can gain hands-on experience in research, project management, and community development. These programs will be designed to meet the growing needs of the development sector, ensuring that students are not only academically prepared but also equipped with practical skills that are crucial for their future careers.

#### Environmental Sustainability and Community Engagement

In line with HRDN's commitment to environmental sustainability, the MoU also includes a focus on ecological awareness. Plantation drives will be organized around the Chakri Campus to instill the importance of green initiatives and environmental responsibility among students. This collaboration aligns with HRDN's broader goal of promoting sustainable development and creating environmentally conscious future leaders.

#### Internship Placements and Real-World Experience

A cornerstone of this partnership is providing internship placements for FJWU students. These internships will offer students valuable hands-on experience in development projects, organizational management, and community outreach. By applying their academic knowledge in real-world settings, students will gain practical insights that will enhance their career prospects and empower them to contribute meaningfully to the development sector.

## Research and Knowledge Exchange

The partnership also aims to foster an environment of research collaboration and knowledge exchange. HRDN will engage FJWU students and faculty in ongoing research projects, helping them build critical thinking and analytical skills that are essential for solving complex global challenges. This collaboration will not only contribute to the growth of academic research but also encourage students to engage with pressing issues such as gender equality, socioeconomic development, and climate change.

The MoU between HRDN and FJWU aligns with multiple SDGs, fostering quality education (**SDG 4**) supports **Target 4.4** through training programs, internships, and research initiatives that equip students with relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship. It promotes gender equality (SDG 5) by empowering female students with leadership opportunities, ensuring their full participation in decision-making and economic life thus fulfilling **Target 5.5**. The initiative also contributes to decent work and **economic growth (SDG 8)** by preparing students for the job market and reducing youth unemployment. With a focus on environmental sustainability (**SDG 12 & 13**), the collaboration instills ecological responsibility through plantation drives and green initiatives, nurturing climate-conscious leaders **Target 12.8 and Target 13.3**. Lastly, the MoU exemplifies partnerships for the goals (**SDG 17**) by fostering cross-sector cooperation between academia, civil society, and youth, reinforcing the collective effort toward sustainable development.

## The Green Revolution

In the face of an escalating climate crisis, HRDN has stepped up to take bold, transformative actions for environmental preservation and sustainability. The year 2023 marked a turning point in HRDN's relentless pursuit to combat climate change, emphasizing the undeniable connection between youth empowerment, community engagement, and the fight against environmental degradation. With a firm belief in the power of synergy, HRDN rallied key stakeholders from government departments, academia, civil society, and communities to unite under one common cause, the future of our planet.

### ***Plant for Pakistan Drive: A Call to Action for a Greener Tomorrow***

On August 31, 2023, HRDN led the Plant for Pakistan Drive, a powerful movement to restore Pakistan's deteriorating green cover. In a display of unwavering commitment, 350 forest and fruit plants were planted at Bari Imam, Islamabad, in collaboration with the Punjab Forest Department. This was not just a tree-planting event, it was a bold statement. A statement that said, "We will no longer sit idly by while our environment suffers. We will act. We will plant. We will preserve."



The drive was more than a simple green initiative; it was an invitation to the youth of Pakistan to take the reins in the battle against climate change. As young people are the future leaders of this world, HRDN sought to empower and educate them through hands-on involvement in environmental action. The drive served as both an educational tool and a call to action, igniting the spirit of collective responsibility and urging communities to come together to protect our shared future.

### ***Spring Plantation Campaign (She Grows, She Glows)***

On March 12, 2024, in celebration of International Women's Day, HRDN launched the Spring Plantation Campaign, aptly named "She Grows, She Glows." This campaign was a masterstroke of environmental and social impact, engaging 1,000 plants in a symbolic effort to green the grounds of FJWU.

Here, HRDN went beyond planting trees—it planted hope and empowerment. Through this initiative, HRDN not only enhanced the green cover in an educational institution but also aligned with its commitment to gender equality. The message was clear: Women and nature share a bond that cannot be broken. Empowering women to take part in environmental stewardship is not just about trees; it's about equity, sustainability, and future generations. By associating women with environmental practices, HRDN reinforced the belief that change starts with us, and every action, no matter how small, contributes to the greater good.



Both campaigns directly contributed to Target 13.1 (strengthening resilience to climate-related hazards) and 13.3 (raising awareness and building capacity for climate change mitigation) under SDG 13: Climate Action.

The plantation drives supported Target 15.1 (sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems) and 15.2 (halting deforestation and increasing reforestation efforts) i.e. SDG 15: Life on Land.

The greening initiatives help address SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by targeting 11.7 by providing access to safe and green spaces, fostering urban sustainability and resilience.

## PROJECTS ACTIVITIES

### Women's Voice and Leadership -Pakistan (WVL-P)

Women Voices and Leadership-Pakistan (WVL-Pakistan) was a five-year project funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and implemented by Oxfam Canada, in collaboration with Oxfam in Pakistan. This project was part of Canada's Women Voices and Leadership Program, which supports local and regional women's organizations and networks that are working to promote women's rights, and advance women's empowerment and gender equality in developing countries. This is accomplished through targeted initiatives, institutional capacity building, and fostering networks and alliances, recognizing women's rights and feminist organizations as key drivers of change. The Program also responds to the globally recognized, significant gap in funding and support to women's rights organizations and movements around the world. The project seeks to advance gender equality in Pakistan by:

- ❖ Supporting the work of, and strengthening Women's Rights Organizations (WROs);
- ❖ Supporting capacity building in proposal development, leadership skills, media, legal frameworks pertaining to women, and on feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning;
- ❖ Providing organizational development training to select WROs based on needs identified by them.;
- ❖ Providing direct grants for operational support and to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of WROs' programs; and
- ❖ Providing responsive funding, research grants and funding for developing one national level alliance.

Through a dedicated website (wvl.org.pk), aimed to enhance the planning, advocacy, and visibility of Oxfam Pakistan's initiatives alongside the efforts of one national and four Provincial Alliances and twelve WROs. the project showcased activities and facilitated the dissemination of research findings funded by Oxfam small grants. These findings were shared at provincial and national levels, engaging academia, researchers, civil society, parliamentarians, and policymakers to promote actionable policies and impactful implementation.

The project successfully concluded in March 2024. During this period, HRDN, as the National Secretariat, spearheaded impactful activities as follows rooted in feminist principles, actively contributing to the vision of a more equal and just society:

## Sixteen (16) Days of Activism 2023

From November 25<sup>th</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, HRDN organized the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, adopting a multifaceted approach that included expert-led webinars, impactful seminars, community mobilization, artistic expression, and on-air advocacy. These diverse initiatives ensured that the message of ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and empowering women and girls reached every corner of society. While the 16 Days of Activism serve as a powerful reminder of this cause, the fight against gender-based violence does not end here—the movement has only just begun.

HRDN hosted a series of insightful webinars featuring distinguished speakers from various sectors, each addressing critical issues related to gender justice and empowerment.

The campaign commenced on November 27, 2023, with Harris Khalique (CEO-HRSP), who led a compelling discussion on *Together We Soar: Men Elevating Women's Empowerment*, highlighting the role of men in fostering gender equality. This was followed by Dr. Fauzia Saeed (Mehergarh) on November 28, delivering an impactful session titled *Behind Closed Doors, No More Secrets: End Domestic Violence*, shedding light on the urgent need to address domestic abuse.

On November 29, Sohail Manzoor (Programme Manager-NRSP) spoke on *She Creates, She Thrives: Empowering Women's Livelihoods*, emphasizing economic independence for women. Humaira Malik (Corporate Head), on November 30, presented *Sustainable SHEROES: Women Leading the Way in Climate Action*, advocating for female leadership in environmental sustainability. The series continued on December 1, with Myra Azam (Vice President Associated Press Pakistan) exploring the role of media in shaping narratives through her session *Unscripted Women: Rewriting the Narrative in Media*.

Muhammad Zafar Ullah Khan (CEO -Vision 2047), on December 2, tackled the modern challenges of womanhood in *Navigating the Modern Maze: Boldly Confronting the Unique Challenges of Womanhood in 21st Century Pakistan*. On December 4, Maliha Hussain (ED-Mehergarh) led a session titled *No More Secrets: Breaking the Silence on Workplace Harassment*, raising awareness about workplace safety. Babar Bashir (MD-Rozan), on December 6, presented *Respect for Every Identity: Unmasking Harassment, Embracing Inclusivity*, promoting respect for all identities.

The campaign further explored economic empowerment on December 7, with Muhammad Ali Kemal (Chief SDGs) delivering *Breaking Ceilings, Building Fortunes: Empowering Women*. On December 8, Barira Hanif (SDG Unit-MoP) addressed the growing concerns of cyber harassment in *Digital Respect: Erase Cyberbullying, Rewrite Respect*.

In the concluding sessions, Abia Akram (CEO-NFWD), on December 9, challenged societal norms in *Shattering Stereotypes: Reshaping Perspectives and Combating Violence against Individuals with Unique Abilities*. On December 10, Mahnoor Ch. (Founder-Pehchan Theater) led *From Crisis to Catalyst: Transformative Conversations on Transgender Harassment*, advocating for transgender rights. Lastly, Naeem Ahmed Mirza (ED-Aurat Foundation), on December 12, delivered an inspiring talk titled *Breaking the Glass Ballot: Unleashing Powerhouse Strategies to Propel Women into Electoral Excellence*, focusing on increasing women's political participation.

This diverse and dynamic lineup of thought leaders, advocates, and professionals ignited critical conversations, fostering a deeper understanding of gender-based issues and collective action towards a more inclusive and just society.

## Engaging Youth

### The Leaders of Tomorrow

Youth, as the leaders of tomorrow, were engaged through interactive seminars designed to foster awareness, advocacy, and action. Events such as *"Empowering Youth to Combat Gender-Based Violence: Prevention and Advocacy"* at IIUI and *"Women's Contribution in the Care Economy"* at COMSATS provided students—the future change-makers of Pakistan—with the knowledge, tools, and platform to lead the charge for gender equality and social justice. These seminars not only raised awareness but also equipped participants with practical strategies to challenge societal norms, advocate for policy change, and drive meaningful impact within their communities. By directly engaging university students, HRDN ensured that the next generation is prepared to take an active role in creating a more inclusive and just society.

Women's Contribution to the Care Economy Held on December 12th at COMSATS University, this insightful session highlighted the pivotal role of women in the care economy. Ms. Uzma Yaseen, Dr. Shela Tabussam (FIWU), and Dr. Nasira Malik (HRDN) led discussions with over 30 students and faculty on the economic impact of caregiving roles traditionally filled by women. The event underscored the need for recognizing and valuing care work as essential to economic stability. Through expert insights and engaging dialogue, participants gained a deeper understanding of policy gaps and the steps necessary to empower and support caregivers in both formal and informal settings.



### Empowering Through Art: Raising Awareness Among the Young

HRDN also recognized the importance of engaging younger generations in the fight against climate change and gender-based violence. On December 5th, an Art Competition was organized at Government Boys High School Dakhnair in Attock, where boys and girls alike poured their creativity into depicting the "Impact of Climate Change on Girls and Boys." This wasn't just an art contest; it was a call for action, an invitation for youth to express the emotional, social, and environmental challenges

they face. The event highlighted the intersection of climate change and gender; showing how young minds are not just passive observers but active participants in shaping a sustainable future.



## Community Engagement

### A Collective Stand Against Violence

The campaign took to the streets, engaging local communities in Kamra, Attock, where a candlelight vigil was organized to symbolize strength, solidarity, and unity against violence. Over 50 local women gathered, sharing their personal testimonies and lighting candles in the darkness, reminding us all that we must stand together to



end violence. The orange balloons, symbolic of the 16 Days of Activism, floated through the air, carrying the message of hope, empowerment, and unity. This was more than just an event it was a movement that connected hearts, sparked conversations, and created a ripple effect of awareness. Local engagement through events symbolized collective strength and solidarity against violence. This grassroots mobilization bridged awareness with action, encouraging communities to take a stand for women's rights.

## Media Engagement

### Reaching the Masses: On-Air Advocacy with HUM Pushto

HRDN team appearing on HUM Pushto Morning Show "Pakhair Pakhtunkhwa" to discuss the campaign and share the vital message of the 16 Days of Activism with a wider audience. In this special slot, the CEO, HRDN, Ms. Robeela Bangash, and the HRDN team were invited thrice consecutively to reflect on HRDN's ongoing commitment to empowering women and addressing gender-based violence. The team discussed the significance of the 16 Days of Activism, the initiatives undertaken by HRDN, and the vital contributions made by its members. This on-air segment not only broadcasted the campaign's messages far and wide but also highlighted HRDN's continuous efforts to raise awareness, mobilize communities, and create a safer environment for women and girls across the country.



## National Symposium

### Unpaid Care Work and Women's Political Participation: A Landmark Event for Gender Justice

On December 28, 2023, a landmark symposium was held at the Marriott Hotel, Islamabad, to showcase research and advance gender justice in Pakistan. Organized by HRDN, as the National Secretariat of WVL-P, in collaboration with Oxfam and GAC, the event focused on two critical issues: Unpaid Care Work and Women's Political Participation.

This symposium was groundbreaking as it brought national attention to unpaid care work, a previously overlooked issue. Over 65 participants, including representatives from the Planning Commission, the SDG Unit, civil society, and donor organizations, attended the event. The symposium featured keynote addresses from Ms. Fajar Rabia Pasha (SAPM Education) and panel discussions with prominent figures such as: Mr. Ali Kemal (Chief, SDG Unit), Ms. Fawzia Arshad (Senator), Mr. Walid Iqbal (Senator), Mr. Raza Ali (CEO, P&JN) and Mr. Zafrullah Khan (CEO, Vision 2047).



The event also launched three key research publications:

1. "Unveiling the Invisible: Unseen Labour" by Dr. Shehla Tabussam
2. "Gender Transformative Analysis of Women Inclusion Strategies" by Mr. Zulqarnain Haider
3. "Catalyzing Change: Fostering Fairness and Elevating Equality Beyond Barriers" by Mr. Zubair

The symposium successfully enhanced knowledge-sharing, strengthened stakeholder networks, and provided valuable insights for policy development in gender justice initiatives.

The Planning Commission and SDG Unit acknowledged the unprecedented nature of this research, recognizing its critical importance. For the first time, they expressed a commitment to incorporating these findings into national programs. Officials specifically emphasized that this research would serve as a foundation for documenting unpaid care work in Pakistan's GDP, a pivotal step towards gender equality.

Discussions on women's political participation sparked insightful debates, with senators recommending reforms to improve legal frameworks and establish mentorship opportunities for women in politics.

Dr. Noreen Khalid, Team Leader of WVL-P, highlighted Oxfam's transformative approach, which is supported by 6.23 million CAD in funding. This initiative has empowered 12 WROs and five Alliances to advocate for gender justice. The event underscored the importance of collaboration between government bodies, ministries, and researchers to drive systemic change. Given Pakistan's ranking of 176 out of 181 on the Gender Development Index, the research presented at the symposium serves as a call to action for policymakers to adopt comprehensive strategies for women's empowerment.



In her closing remarks, Ms. Robeela Bangash, CEO, HRDN emphasized the significance of these findings for policymakers and stressed the need for continued advocacy to drive long-term, systemic change across Pakistan.



## Feminist Manifesto

Ahead of the Pakistan Election 2023, HRDN collaborated with civil society organizations to draft and launch the Feminist Manifesto, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at promoting gender justice and empowering women across the country. This influential document, developed through the collective efforts of five alliances and twelve WROs, serves as a powerful advocacy tool for gender equality and women's rights.

By fostering partnerships between political parties, academia, civil society, and media, the manifesto created a united front for gender justice. Political representatives from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and Qomi Watan Party (QWP) actively participated, emphasizing the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in driving systemic change. With widespread involvement, the initiative successfully engaged over 230 participants across Pakistan.

To ensure broad political engagement, four provincial events were organized to present the Feminist Manifesto to various political parties: Peshawar – January 17, 2024, Quetta – January 23, 2024, Karachi – January 25, 2024, and Lahore – January 29, 2024.

These events underscored the power of collaboration, bringing together alliances, WROs, and political entities to advocate for progressive gender policies. This effort aligns with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by demonstrating how strategic partnerships can accelerate progress toward shared objectives.

One of the key achievements of the initiative was securing political commitment to gender equality. By engaging political leaders, the manifesto encouraged tangible steps toward advancing gender justice and women's rights. This contributed to strengthening political will and integrating gender-responsive policies into governance frameworks. The manifesto directly supports SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by advocating for women's rights and fostering dialogue on eliminating discriminatory practices.

Recognizing the importance of contextualized solutions, the initiative tailored discussions to reflect community-specific challenges. This ensured that gender-responsive policies were not only relevant but also impactful across political, social, and economic spheres.

Moreover, these discussions played a critical role in advocacy for women's empowerment, creating a ripple effect that strengthened collective efforts for gender justice. By engaging diverse voices, the initiative reinforced the urgency of sustained action to advance women's rights in Pakistan's political and social landscape.

By reinforcing advocacy and policy integration, this initiative laid the foundation for long-term change. It helped establish a shared understanding among political and civil society leaders, ensuring that gender justice remains a priority in future policymaking and governance structures.

Furthermore, by engaging diverse stakeholders and amplifying marginalized voices, the manifesto aligns with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), working to dismantle systemic gender disparities. It also supports SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by promoting transparent, gender-sensitive governance through policy dialogues and civil society engagement.

## Provincial Knowledge-Sharing Events

HRDN organized a series of training sessions on Feminist Research Methodologies at key events with strategic alliances, including Legislative Watch Group (LWG) in Karachi on October 24, 2023, MUMKIN Alliance in Lahore from October 2-4, 2023, and Women Lead Alliance Balochistan (WLAB) in Quetta from November 8-9, 2023. These sessions enriched participants' knowledge of feminist research approaches, encouraging critical discourse on gender-sensitive methodologies and their practical application. The training fostered a deeper understanding of nuanced research practices, equipping attendees with the tools needed to conduct meaningful and gender-inclusive research. Outcomes from these sessions included an enhancement in research quality and a strengthened capacity among participants to integrate feminist methodologies in their work, ultimately advancing the goals of each alliance and contributing to HRDN's mission of empowering equitable research practices.

## The FEM Consortia Launch at the FEM Conference

HRDN took center stage at the prestigious FEM Conference, **Strengthening the Collective Footprint to Create a Just Future for Women and Girls in Pakistan**, organized by FEM Consortia, a project partner under WVL-Pakistan. The event, held in Karachi on February 20-21, 2024, brought together key stakeholders committed to gender justice.

The FEM Consortia, comprising 12 WROs, four Provincial Alliances, and HRDN as the National Alliance, convened over 500 participants from across Pakistan's four provinces. Attendees included NGOs, policymakers, activists, intellectuals, students, and media professionals, all engaging in critical discussions on gender equality and climate resilience.

The conference sparked thought-provoking discussions through the presentation of four position papers, addressing:

- ❖ Women's political participation
- ❖ Challenges faced by adolescent girls
- ❖ Women's resilience to climate change
- ❖ Unpaid care work

By tackling these pressing issues, the conference directly contributed to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). HRDN played a pivotal role in highlighting the challenges faced by adolescent girls, advocating for policy reforms and programs that ensure their empowerment and inclusion in societal progress.

Amid this gathering of visionaries and change-makers, HRDN's presence was both transformative and influential. Ms. Robeela Bangash shared the platform with esteemed professionals from the development sector, illuminating HRDN's unwavering commitment to addressing the unique struggles of young girls and championing their right to a just and equitable future.



Beyond panel discussions, HRDN actively engaged participants through an interactive stall featuring Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials and comprehensive knowledge resources. This dynamic showcase provided deep insights into HRDN's gender-focused programs, fostering dialogue and paving the way for future collaborations.



HRDN's collaborative approach exemplifies SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), working alongside FEM Consortia, Oxfam, and other key stakeholders to drive meaningful, systemic change through multi-stakeholder partnerships. These efforts collectively contribute to building a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future.

## Gender Leadership Program (GLP) Institutionalization

The GLP has emerged as a transformative force, reshaping the mindsets and skills of professionals while creating a ripple effect that extends far beyond individual participants. With its institutionalization, the GLP is paving the way for lasting impact, benefiting communities and expanding the project's outreach in profound ways.

The National Coordinator WVL-P successfully completed three GLP modules, a milestone that began in September 2023 and continued with further actions in January 2024. This achievement underscores the program's commitment to fostering leaders who are equipped to drive gender equity and social change.

### Building a Legacy with Community Resource Persons (CRPs)

At the heart of this initiative was the transformative training of 30 elementary school teachers/Community Resource Persons (CRPs) **affiliated with** GBTI Attock. These dedicated individuals became torchbearers of GLP principles, passing on their knowledge to their communities and schools. By conducting three to five sessions each, they not only amplified the program's impact but also helped create a self-sustaining cycle of empowerment.

To recognize their contributions, CRPs were awarded certificates and a monetary honorarium of PKR 10,000, reinforcing their efforts and encouraging continued community engagement.

### Strengthening Institutions, Inspiring Students

A collaboration with Mumkin Alliance in Lahore further integrated GLP principles into institutional growth, fostering long-term advocacy and implementation. Meanwhile, in December 2023, the program expanded its outreach to younger generations through training sessions at Lahore College for Women University and Punjab University. By equipping 35 students with the tools of gender leadership, the GLP instilled a sense of purpose and readiness to lead the charge for gender equity.

### A Ripple Effect of Change

The institutionalization of the GLP has proven to be a game-changer, not just for those who received the training but also for entire communities. Its cascading impact is shaping narratives, fostering inclusivity, and leaving an indelible mark on countless lives.

## Closeout Ceremony of WVL-P

## A Unified Celebration of Empowerment with HRDN, 12 WROs, and 4 Provincial Alliances

On February 27, 2024, a defining moment in the fight for women's rights unfolded as Oxfam hosted the formal closeout ceremony for the transformative WVL-P project. The event was a powerful celebration of unprecedented achievements, paving the way for the next chapter in advocacy and empowerment. As HRDN took center stage, the establishment of the Executive Council and Working Council for the FEM Consortia stood as a bold commitment to the continuous advocacy of women's rights, ensuring the momentum for gender justice never falters. HRDN, as a pillar of this legacy, took on the critical responsibility of maintaining the WVL website, guaranteeing the visibility of WROs and the lasting impact of the alliance's work. This milestone moment wasn't just a closing; it was the spark for an ongoing, unrelenting journey toward equality, justice, and empowerment for women across the country.



## Results Achieved by WVL-P

### Results achieved at the end of the WVL-P project include:

- (1) 12 core WROs demonstrated more gender-inclusive practices in their respective areas. They enhanced their skills in community engagement, proposal development, gender-responsive financial management, and safeguarding practices. Also, these WROs improved their organizational, operational, and governing systems and developed more gender-just policies and compliance practices;
- (2) Allowed that 75% of leadership positions within the 12 core WROs are occupied by women compared to 61% at baseline;
- (3) Supported the 12 core WROs to organize 599 public events, engaging 4,224 stakeholders to advocate for women's rights at the district level;
- (4) Awarded 18 research grants to organizations to produce evidence-based research products on topics such as domestic violence, the rights of domestic violence workers, social protection, and the care economy; and
- (5) Supported 5 women's rights alliances (1 national and 4 provincial). This improved their ability to collectively engage in gender-sensitive policy change.

## THE COMPANY

### Human Resource Development Network

Human Resource Development Network (HRDN) or HRD Network is a membership-based network of national and international NGOs and individual professionals. Promoting sustainable development, strengthening individual and institutional capacities and improving governance through evidence-based policy advocacy is the primary focus of HRDN, which is strongly reflected in our ideology and program design.



Over the years, HRD Network emerged as a leading Network in the development sector of Pakistan that represents around 850 individual professionals, more than 145 national and international NGOs, Educational Institutions and Public and Private Sector Organizations working for the development of Pakistan. The Network also maintains a rich resource pool of more than 300 experts from diverse backgrounds, which provides technical assistance and capacity building support to organizations and individuals.

The Network's extensive presence through its organizational and professional members positions it as a distinct network of not-for-profit sector in Pakistan which facilitates, contributes and implements innovative and challenging models of development and ensure knowledge sharing in collaboration with its members across Pakistan.

## History

In the year 1999, the HRD Network was conceived as a platform of professionals working for human resource development in Pakistan, to network, learn and share knowledge and best practices. The idea of bringing professionals together gradually evolved into a vibrant and inclusive network of institutions and individuals working in different sectors contributing towards sustainable development of Pakistan. The Network was officially registered in 2002 under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. Also, HRDN is an IMCP and ISO 9001:2008 certified institution with its head office in Islamabad.

HRD Network has also established its programmatic focus and over the years piloted and rolled out many innovative models of development by successfully completing projects independently and in consortium with its member organizations. These projects were implemented in the areas of Youth Workforce Development, Primary Education, Governance, Transparency & Accountability, Capacity Building of Public Sector Organizations, Peace Advocacy, Women & Labor Rights, Economic Empowerment, WASH, Community Based Disaster Resilience & Risk Management, Emergency and Relief activities in collaboration and partnership with USAID, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNOPS and other bilateral donors.

## VISION

Competent Human Resource to Achieve Professional Excellence Towards Sustainable Development.

## MISSION

To Enhance Individual and Institutional Competencies by facilitating Capacity Development and Evidence-Based Policy Advocacy.

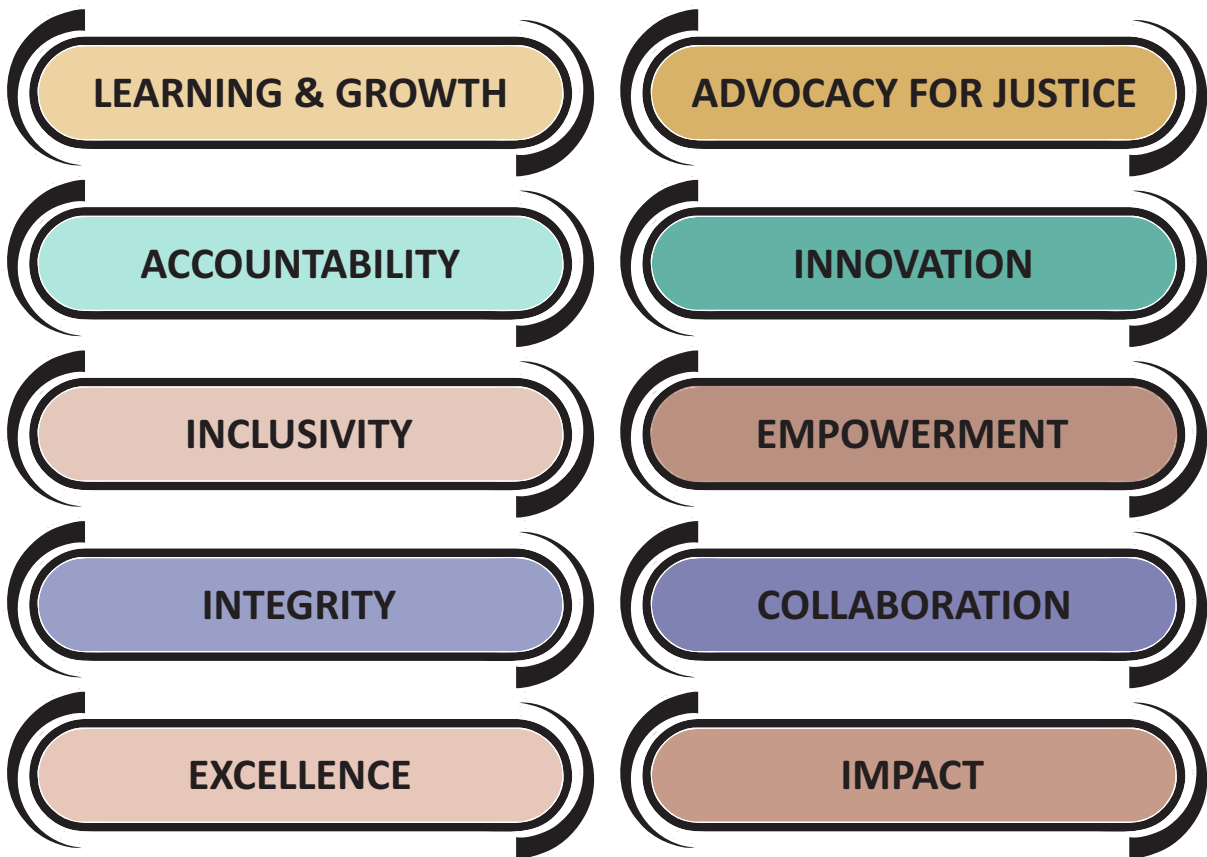
## OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To provide a platform for exchanging ideas and experiences to promote human resource development.
- ❖ To influence policy by evidence-based advocacy towards sustainable development.
- ❖ To support individuals & organizations in improving training-related research methodologies, improving training quality, and capacity-building endeavors.
- ❖ To establish and strengthen partnerships with national and international institutions and practitioners operating within the human resource development sphere.
- ❖ To set and regularly review quality and self-regulatory standards for the development sector in light of best practices around the world.
- ❖ Organize national & international events to enhance development between partners and promote learning and knowledge sharing through networking.

**Guiding Principles: The Core Values That Drive HRDN’s Mission and Impact**

At HRDN, our core values are the driving force behind our mission to create lasting, impactful change. They shape every interaction, decision, and partnership, reflecting our commitment to excellence, collaboration, and inclusivity. These values guide our pursuit of sustainable development, empowering individuals and organizations to thrive.

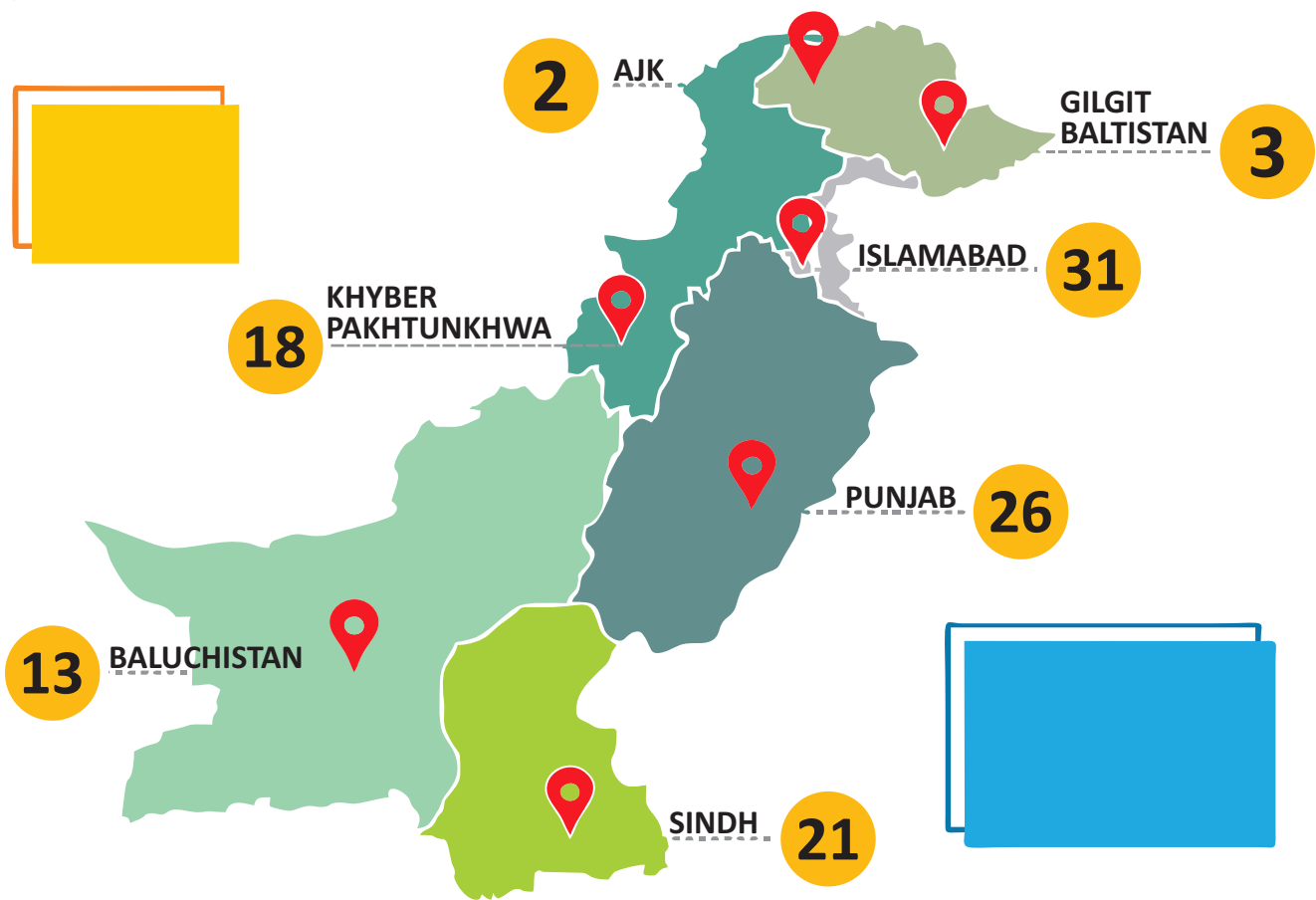
**CORE VALUES**



By upholding these values, HRDN continues to be a catalyst for transformation, ensuring that every action we take resonates with our goal of building a just, equitable, and prosperous future for all.

OUR FOOTPRINTS

HRDN MEMBERS



## ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



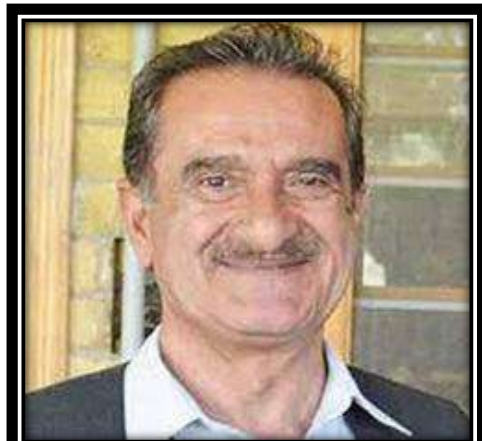
**Dr. Roomi S. Hayat**  
Co-Founder/Chairperson



**Dr. Noor Fatima**



**Dr. Sono Khangarani**



**Mr. Anwar Saleem Kasi**








**Mr. Muzaffar Uddin**



**Ms. Humera Malik**

## HRD NETWORK COMMITTEES

 <p><b>CITY CHAPTERS COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Mr. Ansar Nawaz Chattha Mr. Anis Danish Mr. Sahibzada Jawad Alfarezi Ms. Nausheen Azam</p>	 <p><b>INTERNATIONAL EVENT COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Mr. Sharif Khan (Chair) Mr. Malik Fateh Khan Ms. Fouzia Bilqis</p>	 <p><b>AUDIT COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Mr. Muzaffar Uddin (Chair) Ms. Sumaira Sadaf Dr. Noor Fatima</p>	 <p><b>MEMBERSHIP ACCEPTANCE COMMITTEE (MAC)</b></p> <p>Mr. Waqar Haider Awan (Chair) Mr. Arshad Mahmood Akif Ms. Grace T Sheikh</p>	 <p><b>FINANCE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Mr. Faheem Siddique (Chair) Mr. Agha Zafar Mr. Bilal Azhar</p>
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### Program Team:

- ❖ Ms. Robeela Bangash (CEO)
- ❖ Dr. Nasira Malik (Project Manager)
- ❖ Mr. Talha Hassan-Admin (Finance Officer)
- ❖ Mr. Bilal Azhar (Financial Advisor)
- ❖ Ms. Sumaira Sadaf (Internal Auditor)
- ❖ Ms. Tasneem Fatima (Monitoring Expert)
- ❖ Ms. Zahra Tul Fatima (Institutional Building/Gender/Livelihood Expert)
- ❖ Ms. Saima Khatoon (Business Development/Governance)

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The financial report provides a comprehensive summary of HRDN's financial performance and resource management during the fiscal year. It reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsible financial stewardship. In line with best practices, the report includes detailed insights into revenue generation, expenditure management, and investments made towards the organization's key initiatives. The audited financial statement, prepared by an external auditor, follows this section, offering an independent evaluation of HRDN's financial standing and adherence to regulatory requirements.



# Thank you

together: Join us in  
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7, Sunrise Avenue, Park Road, Near COMSATS University Islamabad.



+92 51 874 22 078



[www.hrdn.net](http://www.hrdn.net)

[www.hrdn.net](http://www.hrdn.net)



[info@hrdn.net](mailto:info@hrdn.net)



[hrdn.net](http://hrdn.net)



[HRDN\\_Pakistan](https://twitter.com/HRDN_Pakistan)