

# Pakistan's Youth: A Defining Opportunity Amid a Mounting Crisis

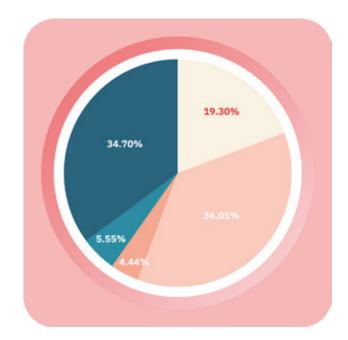
Pakistan is currently experiencing one of the largest youth bulges in the world, with over 55% of its population under the age of 25 and approximately 36% below the age of 15. This demographic shift presents both an enormous opportunity and a significant challenge.

While the youthful population has the potential to become a powerful engine for economic growth and innovation, the country has struggled to provide the necessary resources, education, skills development, and employment opportunities to harness this potential effectively. As a result, Pakistan continues to rank low on global indices measuring youth development, education quality, and employment readiness.

Each year, an estimated 4 million young people enter the labor market. To meet this influx, Pakistan needs to generate at least 1.5 million new jobs annually until 2040—just to keep pace with the growing demand. However, this comes at a time when the country is already grappling with its highest unemployment rates in over two decades. Youth unemployment is particularly acute, reflecting a mismatch between the skills being taught and the needs of the economy, as well as a lack of investment in high-growth sectors.

Moreover, of those who are employed, a troubling number are trapped in precarious working conditions: over 60% of young workers are engaged in informal, unstable, or low-paying jobs with limited career progression, and nearly 35% are working in unpaid roles, often within family businesses or agricultural settings. This systemic underemployment contributes to widespread disillusionment and economic vulnerability, compounding the sense of

# Breakdown of Pakistan's Population age structure based on the 2020 census data



- 0-14 years: 36.01% (42.9 million males, 41.1 million females)
- 25-54 years: 34.7% (41.6 million males, 39.4 million females)
- 15-24 years: 19.3% (23.1 million males, 21.9 million females)
- 65 years and over: 4.44% (4.8 million males, 5.6 million females)
- 55-64 years: 5.55% (6.5 million males, 6.4 million females)

hopelessness among Pakistan's youth. This situation is creating an aspirational crisis of alarming proportions. Without meaningful pathways to secure and dignified livelihoods, the energy and ambition of millions of young Pakistanis risk being squandered. If not addressed urgently, the youth bulge could shift from being a demographic dividend to a demographic liability—fueling social unrest, migration pressures, and deepening cycles of poverty and inequality.

Pakistan can unlock the full potential of its youth and build a more prosperous, inclusive, and resilient future.

# **History of Enterprise Challenge Pakistan**

Established in 2015, Enterprise Challenge Pakistan emerged from a collaboration between King's Trust International (previously known as Prince's Trust International) and SEED Ventures.

Over the years, SEED Ventures has orchestrated seven cycles of Enterprise Challenge Pakistan, engaging more than 8,200 young participants from every corner of Pakistan.

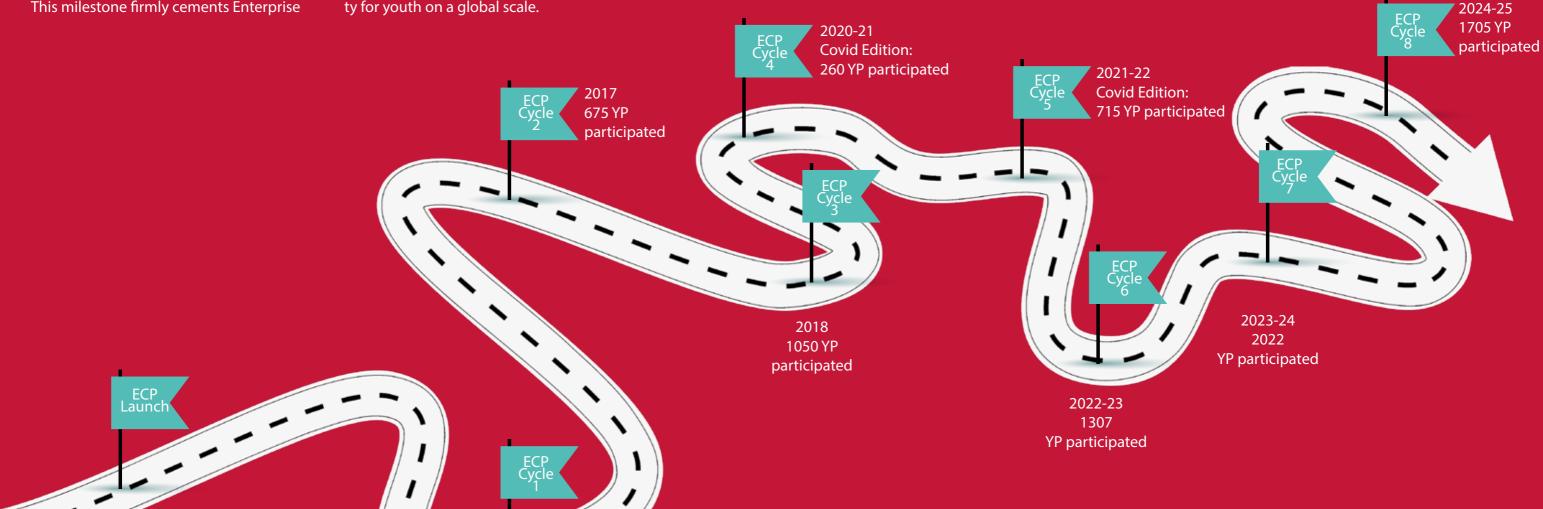
This milestone firmly cements Enterprise

Challenge Pakistan as the nation's premier youth-focused business competition.

Forbes, acknowledging its significance, has featured Enterprise Challenge among the 'Five Leading Programmes Supporting the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs.

'This accolade underscores its profound influence in nurturing entrepreneurial talents and opening avenues of opportunity for youth on a global scale.

> 2016 300 YP participated



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# ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE PAKISTAN

Enterprise Challenge Pakistan (ECP) is a nationwide competition designed to inspire and develop entrepreneurial and core skills among students aged 14 to 18.

Through the programme, participants engage in interactive classroom activities, experience running a business through a business simulation game, and receive mentorship to create and present a pitch for their business idea.

Over the course of the programme, participants: Participants develop the following core skills:





Instilling entrepreneurship in young minds

## **OUR IMPACT**

In the last 8 cycles of Enterprise Challenge Pakistan (2016-2025)



48000+ Students engaged in orientation sessions



Young people participated including children with special needs



30+
cities in all regions of Pakistan



2958
Hours of sessions delivered in schools



26500+ Student applications were received



493
Schools participated including private and public



Mentorship hours

delivered

business ideas were received



986
Teachers were trained to deliver the sessions



**200**Existing entrepreneurs were trained to be Mentors to deliver mentorship



£ 29,000
Worth of cash
prizes awarded to
teams

Scan to see our impact video: https://youtu.be/Lyiluwv5IHg?feature=shared



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# **Programme Outcomes**

Percentage of young people who reported improvement in the following skills:



Self Confidence



Working with others



Communication



Self Management

**92**%



Setting & Achieving goals



Understanding others



Entrepreneurship



**Problem-Solving** 



Digital Skill

## **KEY FINDINGS**

Young people who participated in Enterprise Challenge Pakistan have given stellar reviews about their experience. Here are 12 reasons why they rated the programme so highly:

**83**%

Of young people are now capable of explaining complex business concepts in a way that is comprehensible for their family and friends

**87**%

Of young people, participating in Enterprise Challenge Pakistan, haveimproved their understanding of the skills required to successfully operate a business

**79**%

Young people now have a heightened awareness of issues related to climate change and the environment

**85**%

Of young people expressed their interest in gaining more knowledge about business concepts

**95**%

Young people reported having a better understanding of the possibility of entrepreneurship being a feasible career option for them

**83**%

Young people reported that the programme has instilled a sense of inspiration in them to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and become job creators in the future

**82**%

Of young people said they are more likely to consider starting a business or finding employment that is committed to safeguarding the environment

**85**%

Of young people found the

contents and material covered in

the programme to be simple to

follow and comprehend

**78**%

Of young people found the application of business concepts in the pop-up game easy to understand and were able to connect the dots between theory and practice

**93**%

Of young people said that they were well aware of how to seek help or support in case they had any concerns or issues

Of young people found the presentations and activities to be highly engaging

The mentoring support provided in the programme left an indelible impact on young people, with 96% of them labeling their experience a 'amazing'

## **NOTABLE ENTERPRISE IDEA**

Mahnoor's fledgling enterprise uses food waste to feed black soldier fly larvae. She sells the larvae from her colony as organic chicken feed. Additionally, she is experimenting with a bio-tech procedure to extract chitosan powder from the larvae's cocoons.



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While the youthful population has the potential to become a powerful engine for economic growth and innovation, the country has struggled to provide the necessary resources, education, skills development, and employment opportunities to harness this potential effectively. As a result, Pakistan continues to rank low on global indices measuring youth development, education quality, and employment readiness.

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## SCHOOL ONBOARDING

The process of school onboarding began with reaching out to new schools and schools that had previously participated in the programme over emails, phone calls and in-person meetings with the school management. Interested schools filled out an application form, after which they were shortlisted and selected for the programme. Overall, 75 schools participated in the programme, including 48 private (64%) and 27 public (36%). All public schools are free of cost.

Amongst the private schools, 32% charge a minimum fee below Rs. 5,000 per month, 23% charge fee between Rs. 5,000-Rs. 10,000 and the remaining 9% charge fee above Rs. 10,000. The programme covers a good geographical spread, covering 16 cities across the country. This year, we initiated a pilot for disability inclusion under which we onboarded a school catering to children with disabilities in Dharki.

Private Public Grand Total

Region	City	Private	Public	Grand Total		
Balochistan	Pishin	4		4		
	Quetta	5	6	11		
Balochistan Total		9	6	15		
Federal	Gilgit City		5	5		
	Islamabad		10	10		
	Kotli		1	1		
	Mirpur Ajk		1	1		
	Muzaffarabad		2	2		
	Rawalakot		1	1		
Federal Total			20	20		
Khyber						
Pakhtunkhwa	Mansehra	5		5		
	Peshawar	6		6		
	Swabi	1		1		
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa						
Total		12		12		
Punjab	Lahore	3		3		
	Multan	7	1	8		
Punjab Total		10	1	11		
Sindh	Dharki	1		1		
	Hyderabad	6		6		
	Karachi	10		10		
Sindh Total		17		17		
Grand Total		48	27	75		

## STUDENT ONBOARDING

Student onboarding begins with programme orientation day at the participating schools. Orientation day is a 2-3 hours activity in which all students aged 14-18 years of the school are gathered in a hall and given an overview of the programme and why they should participate.

This session creates curiously and sparks interest about entrepreneurship amongst students. The interested students then apply for the programme via an application form. Teachers, with the help of ECP team, shortlist the applications and select 20-25 students from each school to participate in the programme. Overall 2500+ applications were received out of which 1705 students participated and eventually completed the programme.

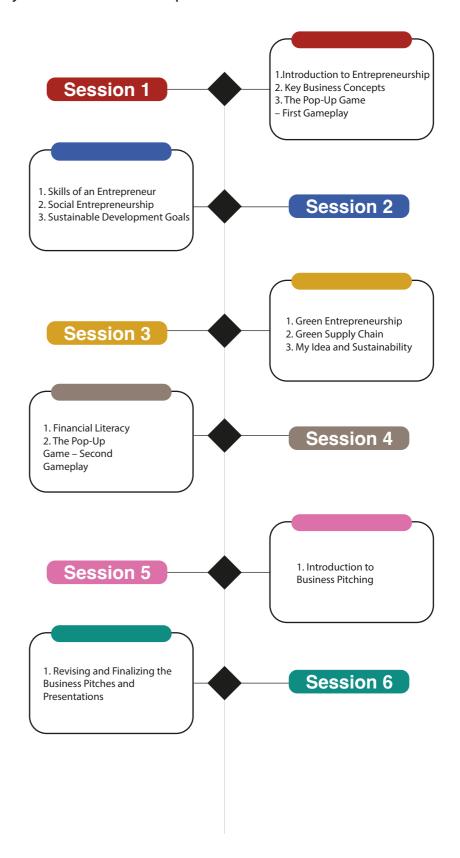
Out of 1705 participants 882 (52%) were girls and 823 (48%) were boys keeping a good gender balance. Under our pilot for disability inclusion, we onboarded 16 students with various disabilities, including visual, hearing, speech, physical, and intellectual. These students were provided with a level playing field in all programme activities, enabling them to fully participate.

	Karachi	Hyderabad	Daharki	Lahore	Multan	Peshawar /Swabi		Islamabad	Gilgit	Muzaffarab ad Rawal Kot, Kotli, Mirpur	Quetta	Pishin
Students Onboarded	242	141	16	67	150	128	100	245	124	127	265	100
Girls	124	84	4	57	44	55	75	114	49	87	164	25
Boys	118	57	12	10	106	73	25	131	75	40	101	75



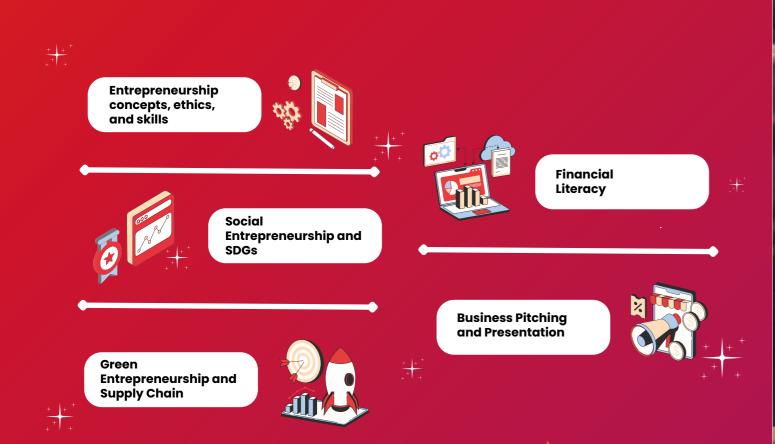
# **Entrepreneurship Sessions**

This year's programme witnessed active participation from 1,705 young people, indicating a strong interest in entrepreneurship and skill development. Over the course of six sessions, participants delved into diverse subjects crucial for entrepreneurial success.



# ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE PAKISTAN CURRICULUM

Curriculum is available in English, Urdu and Braille









# **NATIONAL FINALS**

Where Dreams Come True

The finals were held in Islamabad on 18 January 2025 at the British High Commission Islamabad. The event featured promising start-up ideas from the regional finalists.

British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: "Meeting these extraordinary young finalists and hearing their innovative business ideas, and how they are helping their communities, has left me energized and hopeful going into 2025. They are a true credit to Pakistan. I've no doubt our paths will cross again as they go onto even bigger innovations."

Global Young Achiever Award Winner Mahnoor said: "Enterprise Challenge Pakistan provided me with the skills to establish and run a business. I understood the concept of social enterprises and a sense of giving back to the community. This platform offered both a commercial sense and an ethical perspective, helping us realize how we could benefit society." The distinguished presence of business industry experts and philanthropists from the public, private, and development sectors further accentuated the event's significance within the entrepreneurial landscape. This gathering epitomized a convergence of influential stakeholders, fostering meaningful connections, collaboration, and recognition of entrepreneurial excellence.





# **Our Judges**

From left to right:

#### 1. Rabail Sadozai

Director Marketing & Sales, Fatima Fertilizer

#### 2. Khurram Hussain

CEO, Alfalah Insurance Company Limited

#### 3. Rohma Labeeb

Country Director, Accelerate Prosperity

#### 4. Naeem Ghauri

President & Founder, Netsol

#### 5. Dr Nafisa Shah

Member of National Assembly

#### 6. Faisal Aftab

CEO, Zayn Venture Capital

#### 7. Tashmina Islam Hoque

Director, COSARAF Foundation

#### 8. Jamal Mir

CEO, Prestige Communications



changes for inclusive education.

materials. These resources include



# Runner Up & Recipient of Most Climate-Friendly Idea Award

Peshawar

Project: Alpha Achievers

School: University Model School

The project addresses several critical issues, including urbanization and limited space, poverty and food shortages, water and resource-intensive farming, food waste, supply chain inefficiencies, and the use of pesticides on vegetables. To tackle these problems, the Alpha Achievers propose the "Green Sprout Farm," which focuses on local freshness, water efficiency, space-saving, eco-friendliness, and sustainable supply.

The farm utilizes aeroponic technology, a soil-less cultivation method where plant roots are suspended in the air and sprayed with a nutrient-rich mist. The marketing strategy includes creating a website,

targeting organic shops, restaurants, and social media. The Green Sprout Farm will use 30% less water than hydroponics, will be pesticide-free, will use 98% less water than traditional farming, and be affordable. Overall, the Alpha Achievers' Green Sprout Farm project aims to provide a sustainable, efficient, and eco-friendly solution for food security and resource management in urban areas.

# Regional Finalists & Recipient of Most Impactful Idea Award

Quetta

Project: Nutribites

School: Dawn Ideal High School

The project addresses significant nutritional deficiencies in the region, highlighting that 41% of women are anaemic, 22% are vitamin A deficient, 52% are calcium deficient, and 50% of children suffer from malnutrition in Pakistan. The Nutribites team proposes a solution in the form of gummies enriched with essential nutrients: iron, calcium, and vitamin A.

The ingredients for these gummies include agar powder, xylitol (a sweetener), food colouring, fruit extracts, gelatine powder, and other specified nutrients. The financial plan includes a marketing cost of 20,000 RS and a manufacturing cost of 76,000 RS,

totalling 82,700 RS. The retail cost per bottle, after tax, is set at 375 RS, with an average revenue of 105,000 RS and a profit of 22,300 RS. The marketing and sales strategy involves leveraging an online marketplace, collaborating with a digital marketing agency (Bocoh Studios), and managing logistics effectively.

The project aims to create a significant social impact by providing affordable, nutritious options to address widespread deficiencies. Nutribites positions itself as a competitive product by offering affordability, variety, and efficiency compared to other available options.



# Regional Finalists & Recipient of Most Financially Viable Idea Award

Multan

Project: Paws on Wheel's

School: Beaconhouse Main Campus

Paws on Wheel's addresses several issues faced by pet owners, including geographical immobility, crowded clinics, stress levels for pets, and the struggle of stray animals. The solution proposed is a mobile veterinary service offering a range of doorstep services such as health checkups, grooming, vaccinations, diagnostics, emergency services, and pet rescue. The market opportunity is significant, with a high percentage of pet owners in Pakistan valuing quality veterinary services. The technology and operations plan includes a scheduling system, mobile payments, and digitalized equipment. Industry trends show growth in pet ownership and increased spending on

pets, with home visits seen as an appealing option. The project will utilize social media engagement, targeted digital advertising, community involvement, customer experience enhancement, and a referral program. Over the next three years, the project will expand by collaborating with other pet marts and integrating technology such as a mobile application. Overall, the Paws on Wheel project aims to provide comprehensive, convenient, and high-quality veterinary services directly to pet owners' doorsteps, addressing the challenges faced by pet owners and contributing to the well-being of pets and strays in Multan.

# Regional Finalists & Recipient of Most Innovative Idea Award

Islamabad

Project: Aqua Wave

School: Islamabad College for Boys G-6/3

An estimated 70% of households in Pakistan still consume bacterially contaminated water, leading to widespread diseases such as Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Diarrhoea, and Polio.

The root causes of this issue include overpopulation, poverty, and a lack of financial resources. About 40% of deaths in Pakistan are attributed to illnesses spread by polluted water. To address this, the Aqua Wave team has developed a water purifying bottle designed to provide instant pure drinking water. This 2-liter bottle uses advanced filtration technology to remove 99.99% of contaminants, bacteria, and viruses, ensuring safe

drinking water for up to six months, with a capacity of purifying 10 liters per day. The technology behind the Aqua Wave bottle includes ceramic balls that trap bacteria and harmful particles, activated carbon that absorbs impurities and chemicals to improve taste and odor, and a sediment filter layer that removes larger particles like sand and silt, extending the lifespan of subsequent layers.

The future roadmap for Aqua Wave includes introducing a 20-litre Aqua Wave water bottle, incorporating UV light technology, implementing Hollow Fibre Membrane Technology for straws, and launching the company internationally.



# ESSA'S CASE STUDY

Vision for Accessible Healthcare

Name: Eesa Age: 17

Location: Karachi, Pakistan

Programme: Enterprise Challenge Pakistan (ECP) 2024–2025 Cycle 8

Eesa was only 17 when he realized that innovation didn't need a lab—it could begin with a piece of paper. Growing up in the city, Eesa often visited his ancestral village, where stories of illness and loss echoed through the community. Malaria had taken a deep toll on the people he loved.

What struck him most was how preventable some of these tragedies were—if only basic diagnostics had been available. If this is the reality for those with some access to healthcare, he thought, how much worse must it be for those with none? Driven by that question, Eesa began searching for simple, affordable solutions. His research led him to paper centrifuges and microscopes—tools made from everyday materials, yet capable of detecting disease and testing water quality.

These small innovations sparked something bigger: EcoPore—a project to bring science to the service of the underserved. But ideas, Eesa soon learned, need the right environment to grow. That's when he joined the Enterprise Challenge Pakistan (ECP). The programme gave him more than just training—it gave him clarity, structure, and belief. What started as a vague idea took shape under the guidance of ECP mentors. Through workshops and teamwork, Eesa learned how to manage time, communicate his vision, and—most

importantly— listen."The ECP challenge shaped our entrepreneurial mindset," Eesa says. "It taught us that every idea has value—and that with teamwork, we can turn those ideas into real change." By the end of the programme, EcoPore was no longer just an idea scribbled in his notebook. It was a mission.

His project gained recognition in his college, and Eesa began sharing his story with other young changemakers, encouraging them to dream beyond boundaries. "Initially, our project had no name," he recalls. "But through ECP, we realized its potential and refined it into something meaningful.

By Allah's grace, what once seemed uncertain is now recognized and respected." Today, Eesa stands proud of what his team has built. With EcoPore, he hopes to reach more communities, improve lives, and prove that even the simplest tools—when paired with purpose— can save lives. "Every struggle we faced became a lesson. Every setback, a stepping stone," he says. "Success isn't just about reaching the destination—it's about never giving up on the dream." As he looks ahead, Eesa has one message for young people: "You don't need perfect conditions to start. All you need is belief, and a platform like ECP that helps you bring your dream to life."



ZASE STUDY
Lighting the Way with Roshni

Name: Zakia Age: 17

Location: Abbotabad, Pakistan

Programme: Enterprise Challenge Pakistan (ECP) 2024–2025 Cycle 7

At Just 15 years old, Zakia Khalid decided that books shouldn't be a luxury for the blind. Growing up in Abbottabad, she lived a life shaped by academic excellence. Her parents, both professionals, encouraged her to focus on studies as the key to a secure future. Zakia followed that path closely—until something shifted.

As a child, she often noticed the quiet presence of visually impaired students at school. Their struggle to access the same books, the same education, stuck with her. But back then, she wasn't sure how someone like her could help. That changed when she joined the Enterprise Challenge Pakistan (ECP) in 2023. Stepping into the programme, Zakia was cautious. "I was hesitant," she admits. "I thought leaving my comfort zone might put my grades at risk."

But ECP's hands-on approach soon opened her eyes. She learned to build a business plan, manage finances, lead a team—and, most importantly, bring an idea to life. Her idea was Roshni. Through Roshni, Zakia and her teammates began producing Braille books for blind schools in her community.

They studied Braille themselves to understand the needs of their audience. The process wasn't easy, but each challenge made their purpose clearer. What began as a class project quickly grew into a mission to make education accessible for all. "The programme taught me more than theory—it gave me real tools to solve real problems.

That changed everything," Zakia reflects. Launching Roshni boosted Zakia's confidence in ways she never expected. She no longer saw herself only as a high-achieving student. She became a leader, an advocate, and a changemaker.

Her project brought pride not only to her family and school but to the visually impaired community whose lives it began to impact. "I'm incredibly proud of Roshni," she says. "We've opened doors to opportunity and brought light to those who needed it most." Zakia now dreams of expanding Roshni to schools across Pakistan—and beyond.

With every Braille book printed, she's proving that young people can lead the way in building a more inclusive world. "Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone," she says to other young dreame 1 Impact Report 2024-25

# **Programme Highlights**



May 2024: Letter of Understanding signed with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to onboard 20 public schools in the Federal region. Through this partnership, schools from Islamabad, Gilgit and Muzaffarabad were onboarded to foster entrepreneurship in students in public schools.



February 2025: Meet and Greet session was hosted by the newly appointed British Deputy High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Lance Domm at the British Deputy High Commission in Karachi, Enterprise Challenge Pakistan programme leadership and alumni shared their experiences, inspirations, and entrepreneurial ambitions with him.



May 2024: Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Special Talent Exchange Programme to be the disability inclusion partner of the programme. With their support, we piloted to deliver the programme to 16 children with disabilities in Daharki's Noor-e-Sahar school. The curriculum was translated in braille, and sessions were also delivered in sign language.



April 2025: Jubilee Life Insurance invited Enterprise Challenge Pakistan participants to attend the Pakistan Super League matches in Karachi and Islamabad. Students met their favourite crickets and celebrities and had a great class-to-stadium experience.

# **Our Sponsor**





### **About Us**



#### The King's Trust International

The King's Trust International, formerly Prince's Trust International, has been supporting young people worldwide since 2015. We were founded by His Majesty King Charles III to tackle the global crisis in youth unemployment, building on almost five decades of experience in the UK. Our mission is to empower young people to learn, earn and thrive. We provide opportunities to develop the skills and confidence to succeed and deliver tangible employment outcomes. By blending our expertise with a global network of local partners, we develop programmes and interventions focused on education, employability, and enterprise to help young people to build their own futures.

#### **SEED Ventures**



SEED Ventures (Social, Entrepreneurship, and Equity Development) was established in 2009. We are social impact ecosystem developers and impact investors. Our work is dedicated to nurturing an ecosystem where social entrepreneurs can thrive and where the social impact of traditional entrepreneurship can be enhanced and scaled. We work with the public, development, and private sector organisations to develop financial mechanisms that maximise impact creation. Our enterprise and social enterprise development focus is on building nano-, micro-, and small-enterprises and start-ups, and we work with potential, aspiring, and existing entrepreneurs. We have segmented our work into four portfolios: children, youth, women, and marginalised communities.

## For more information please contact

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