



PTCL GROUP’S 2024:  
A LANDMARK YEAR OF SOCIAL IMPACT,  
EMPOWERMENT, AND INCLUSION

It fills me with pride to reflect on the remarkable journey of the PTCL Group’s social impact initiatives in 2024, which concluded on an exceptionally high note. This year, we accelerated our transformation from a traditional telecom operator to a holistic tech company, significantly strengthening our digital infrastructure and fostering ‘future readiness’.

Social responsibility & economic empowerment remained central to the PTCL Group’s strategic priorities throughout 2024.

The launch of our social impact platform, ‘DIL SE’, stands as a testament to this commitment that impacted countless lives across the nation. A highlight of this year has been the successful execution of our ‘Ba-Ikhtiar’ program, which has established a new standard in women’s digital & economic empowerment.

Women empowerment is not merely a developmental goal for the PTCL Group, rather it is a fundamental pillar of our vision for a more inclusive and equitable Pakistan. As we look to the future, we remain

unwavering in our commitment to driving positive change, fostering innovation, and building a brighter, more connected future where everyone has equal opportunities to grow regardless of their socioeconomic and cultural standings.

Thank you for being part of this transformative journey.

Hatem Bamatraf  
President and Group CEO



DRIVING PURPOSE WITH INNOVATION:  
THE VISION BEHIND PTCL GROUP’S DIL SE

DIL SE is our social impact platform dedicated to fostering digital inclusivity, kindness, & innovation. Built on three core pillars Tech4Inclusion, Act of Kindness, & Social Innovation fostering to uplift communities and address critical social needs in Pakistan.

Under Tech4Inclusion, DIL SE is leading transformative initiatives, with Ba-Ikhtiar, the flagship project,

empowering women by equipping them with digital skills and tools, financial independence and entrepreneurial abilities.

Another groundbreaking initiative is our partnership with ConnectHear – South Asia’s leading assistive technology startup – revolutionizing disaster response for the Deaf community in Pakistan. Through AI-powered solutions, this project ensures

life-saving information reaches Deaf individuals during emergencies, even in low-connectivity areas.

The Act of Kindness pillar is rooted in the belief that no act is too small—every gesture has the power to create a ripple effect. This initiative encourages collective compassion, proving that simple acts of kindness can drive meaningful change.

Lastly, Social Innovation supports

startups tackling pressing social challenges, nurturing solutions that create lasting impact. As this pillar continues to evolve, it paves the way for a future where technology and innovation serve humanity.

Through DIL SE, we are not just bridging gaps—we are building a future where technology, empathy, and progress go hand in hand.



BA-IKHTIAR  
(100 FAMILIES IMPACTED—  
DOUBLE THE INCOME, AND  
SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER  
HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATION  
OPPORTUNITIES)

The Ba-Ikhtiar Program is a collaborative initiative by the PTCL Group and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) to empower women entrepreneurs by equipping them with digital and financial tools to build sustainable home-based businesses.

The pilot program was launched in Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, beginning with the identification of one hundred semi-skilled women aged 18–26, but operating informally in stitching & embroidery due to limited opportunities.

These women underwent a 15-day skill enhancement training at TEVTA Haripur, where they

refined their craftsmanship and learned new techniques. The PTCL Group provided them with free smartphones, along with Ufone 4G SIMs with year-long free internet access & activated UPaisa mobile wallets to facilitate digital transactions.

The PTCL Group subsidiary, U Microfinance Bank (UBank) then conducted digital financial literacy sessions at the PTCL Haripur Staff College, teaching participants to manage bank accounts and mobile wallets, and offered microfinance loans to eligible beneficiaries. Daraz, Pakistan’s leading e-commerce platform, followed with hands-on training on e-commerce to help

the women create seller accounts, list products, & manage online stores, supplemented by biweekly support sessions.

The successful graduates now run their businesses online & are on an accelerated socioeconomic mobility journey. The PTCL Group continues to support them through various initiatives. Post these trainings these women were provided with the opportunity to highlight the project at national and international platforms.

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Optcl | ufone 4G | U:bank

Daraz | پاپی سہاویہ | NRSP National Rural Support Programme

ابہر عورت ہوگی

بافتیاریہ | دِل سے

Powered by Upaisa

The PTCL Group facilitated two of the program’s star achievers to gain international recognition at GITEX Global – the world’s largest tech expo in Dubai; where they shared their stories with the international community and received immense appreciation that opened a window of opportunities for them.

These women also displayed their handmade products at Lok Mela, Pakistan’s largest cultural and heritage festival, earning widespread acclaim. They describe these experiences as ‘life-changing and empowering.’

The PTCL Group celebrated the achievements of the Ba-Ikhtiar participants with a high-level graduation ceremony in Islamabad, which was attended by the UAE Ambassador, key stakeholders, and prominent personalities from diverse fields such as sports, fashion, entertainment, business, and more, who lauded the hard work and perseverance of these trailblazers.



Way forward

The journey does not stop here. The PTCL Group will be facilitating them in getting their Startup registered with seed funding to scale their businesses and provide workspace at PTCL Haripur Staff College. Additionally, the PTCL Group will arrange their exposure visits to textile factories in Faisalabad. Collaborations with prominent brands are planned with the possibility of having dedicated spaces at their stores highlighting the Ba-Ikhtiar product line. Not only this, but to increase the learning capabilities, training on Shopify, & Meta Suite are also planned for the existing cohort. PTCL’s in-house ‘Razakaar Program’ (volunteers) will provide ongoing mentorship in business strategies, ensuring sustained growth. By bridging the digital divide & fostering entrepreneurship, Ba-Ikhtiar exemplifies the PTCL Group’s commitment to women’s economic and digital empowerment, transforming lives while inspiring similar interventions across Pakistan.

A STITCH TOWARDS  
INDEPENDENCE

Marrium Hussain

Born in a society where sons are seen as assets and daughters not so much, it was a difficult journey to prove myself but nonetheless, I survived, and I prevailed!

I was born and raised in Attock and was married off to a college professor before completing my education. I moved to Haripur, away from my family, away from everything familiar. Over time, I managed to complete my BA, had two daughters, and settled into a life that felt stagnant. But deep inside, I could not shake the feeling that life had more to offer—I just did not know how to reach it.

Then came the day that changed everything. My friend Anoushay told me about an initiative in Haripur—PTCL’s Ba-Ikhtiar program, aimed at empowering women. That evening, I brought it up with my husband. He had always supported me, even teaching me how to drive—a rarity in our community. But this? He dismissed it as a

scam, urging me to focus on working from home.

By then, I had already completed an embroidery design course, something I had secretly loved since childhood but had been forced to abandon. But this time, I was not backing down and convinced my family. I enrolled in Ba-Ikhtiar.

The journey was not easy. Taking the bus to the training center while carrying my ill daughter in my arms was a struggle, but I refused to give up. The team at the training centre ensured that my belief was strengthened further and not shattered. And when I got distinction in my batch, receiving a cash prize of Rs. 35,000... I knew I had made the right decision. The training did not stop there—we learned how to sell on Daraz, use digital payment methods on UPaisa, and expand our businesses. I will never forget the moment I received my first order from Lahore. I held the money in my hands, unsure whether

to spend it or save it. And I chose to save it, and to this day, it reminds me of my beginnings, keeping me grounded.

And then, the unthinkable happened – GITEX Dubai 2024. My first time on a plane, my first time leaving the country. Standing amongst innovators, seeing a world of possibilities beyond what I had ever imagined—it was a dream come true. One thing I know for sure: I must keep learning, growing, and above all, support other women to stand on their own feet.

I was once just another girl with a needle and a dream. But today, I am more.

I am Marrium, and I am Ba-Ikhtiar. Ba-Ikhtiar is not just my story, it is the story of many women who are ready to transform their lives.



# ACT OF KINDNESS ONE GESTURE AT A TIME

The philosophy of this initiative lies in collective compassion, proving that even the simplest acts of kindness can transform lives. To ensure that kindness becomes a way of life, we continue to launch meaningful initiatives that inspire and encourage more acts of generosity in society.

From supporting communities in need to empowering individuals through small yet impactful gestures, DIL SE remains committed to spreading hope and fostering a culture of compassion. From surprising passengers on the Eid train with festive gifts to empowering young girls with e-bikes for their

independent commutes and installing clean water wells in Thar for 15,000 people, we have tried to transform lives in diverse and meaningful ways. Through these initiatives, DIL SE continues to weave stories of hope, proving that kindness, when done with heart, has the power to change lives for good.

## KHUSHIYON BHARI EID TRAIN

A heartwarming example is Ufone's Eid Train Tickets initiative. Last year, they surprised travelers with free tickets and gifts, spreading unexpected joy. One grateful recipient said, "Ufone always says 'Tum hi tou ho,' but today, they truly proved it."



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"Arey Wah, now this is like  
**Having a Double Eid.**  
**Eid Mubarak**  
to Ufone from us as well"  
ہماری تو ذیل عید ہو گئی، یو فون کو بھی  
ہماری طرف سے عید مبارک  
A passenger from Eid Train.

## E-BIKE DISTRIBUTION AT RAWALPINDI WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY



Another impactful venture under this pillar is the E-Bike Initiative for women. The PTCL Group provided female students with e-bikes, offering them not just transport but a newfound sense of independence and security. This initiative is more than just an upgrade in mobility—it

is a step towards empowerment, ensuring young women have a reliable, eco-friendly alternative to waiting in long queues for public transport.

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Dear Younger Me,

I know you do not have the answer yet. When they ask, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"—you hesitate. Not because you do not have dreams, but because you do not think you are allowed to have them.

I see you. Wanting to be in the armed forces. Then sketching. Then wondering if Finance is your thing. I see you, sitting in lockdown, watching the world shift—PUBG exploding, Microsoft Teams becoming the new normal. You wonder, "Why doesn't Pakistan have something like this?" But then, almost immediately, you silence yourself. "Who am I to ask these questions?" Society taught you that some things just are not for girls like you.

I remember how hard it was to step outside. The hours of stress before leaving the house, the exhaustion of standing in cramped buses, the unease of waiting at stops where no one respects your space. You almost gave up. Almost...

When PTCL showed up at your university. They listened. They understood your story. And suddenly, you were one of the lucky girls riding away with an e-bike. Do you know what that meant? It meant freedom. It meant you did not have to rush home in fear before dark. It meant you could stay back, learn more, and push further. It meant that the field that fascinated you—was finally within reach. Most importantly, it meant that the weight was not just lifted off your shoulders; it was lifted off your fathers too. The same father who always

believed in you. The one who planted the idea of self-reliance in your heart before you even knew what it meant. And now, whenever he needs to go somewhere, you make sure to take him. Because he should know—he made the right decision.

Oh, and younger me — one more thing!

One day, you will think about the forgotten ones. Because now, when I start my e-bike and ride through the streets, I am not just moving forward—I am rewriting the rules. I no longer hesitate to step out of my house. I no longer feel like the world was not made for me. The road ahead is mine to explore.

Sitaish Imtiaz

## THAR CLEAN DRINKING WATER PROJECT CLEAN DRINKING WATER PROVIDED TO 15,000 PEOPLE ACROSS 5 UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Extending the spirit of kindness further, the Thar Clean Drinking Water Project has brought hope to the people of Umerkot-Thar. By installing hand pumps, we have provided access to clean drinking water to around 15,000 people. This initiative stands as a testament to

the belief that small gestures can make a significant impact because kisi ki khushi ban'na mushkil nahi, bas jo bhi karo, karo DIL SE.

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## RIPPLES OF CHANGE

Azeem Effendi

In the arid lands of Umerkot, a place etched in history as the birthplace of Mughal Emperor Akbar the Great, life flows slowly, often hindered by the unforgiving scarcity of water. For centuries, the resilient people of this region have struggled against nature's harshness, their dreams often quenched by the unrelenting thirst of the land. However, a new chapter of hope has recently begun to unfold, thanks to the Social Impact initiative of the PTCL Group.

The PTCL Group, a pioneer in connecting communities through communication, has gone beyond its core business to connect Umerkot with the most basic need—clean water. And I am grateful to have witnessed this initiative as part of their team.

As I stepped onto Umerkot's soil, I realized the challenges it faced, especially its Hindu inhabitants. I had heard how villagers often walk miles barefooted under the scorching sun to fetch water, a precious commodity that dictates their daily lives. And how lack of clean water has hampered education,

health, and economic progress in the area. Children miss school, and families spend most of their time and energy securing the bare minimum needed to survive. But witnessing all of that through my own eyes was heart-wrenching.

Recognizing this dire need, the PTCL Group stepped in DIL SE aiming to not only provide water but also restore hope to these people. The project involved digging deep—water wells in strategic locations to ensure year-round access to clean and safe water for the local population. The wells have become more than just a source of water; they symbolize life, opportunity, and progress. Women now have time to focus on entrepreneurial activities, children can attend school without the burden of fetching water, and farmers can irrigate their fields to grow crops that sustain their families.

By addressing a critical need, the PTCL and Ufone 4G have not only enhanced their reputation but also reaffirmed their commitment to the people of Pakistan. They have proven

that while technology connects us, humanity binds us together. I will never forget the human touch of gratitude I received from the Hindu community as they greeted me with their hands. They could neither understand my language, nor could I understand theirs, yet we were connected through a human bond—one for which we both owe the organization our gratitude.

For the PTCL Group, this initiative was not just about fulfilling corporate obligations—it was about empowering a community and leaving a legacy. In a world where businesses often focus solely on profits, they have demonstrated that profitability and philanthropy can go hand in hand.

As I observed the sun setting over the dunes of Umerkot heralding our return to the guesthouse we were staying in, the newly dug wells stood as beacons of hope, their waters nourishing not just the land but also the dreams of those who call it home.

## BLOOD DONATION DRIVE CONNECTING LIVES BEYOND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY



Wajeeha Raza

At the PTCL Group, our commitment to making a difference goes far beyond providing digital connectivity. It is about fostering connections on a human level & giving back to the communities we serve. Each year, on June 14th—International Blood Donor Day, the Group organizes a blood donation drive that embodies this ethos.

This initiative has become a hallmark of PTCL's Group social impact efforts, with employees participating wholeheartedly. It is not just about donating blood; it is about embracing the spirit of compassion & understanding how

every contribution can save lives.

Take the story of Adeel Ansari, one of our dedicated team members, who describes blood donation as a profoundly fulfilling experience. Adeel's perspective was shaped by a personal ordeal when his father needed blood for surgery. While his family was fortunate to find donors in time, he witnessed many others struggling desperately to secure blood for their loved ones. This realization became a turning point for him, inspiring him to donate blood annually.

The sentiment shared by employees like Adeel reflects the

heart of this campaign. For many, it is more than an act of charity—it is a chance to make a tangible difference. Each drop of blood represents hope, resilience, & life itself. Employees are deeply aware of the societal and health benefits their contributions bring, motivating them to give generously year after year.

The PTCL Group's blood donation drive is a testament to the power of collective action. By nurturing a culture of care and responsibility, we aim to inspire others to take part in life-saving initiatives that strengthen our communities, one life at a time.

## PINKTOBER BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Like every year, The PTCL Group actively participated in Breast Cancer Awareness Month, reaffirming its commitment to the cause. The iconic PTCL Group Tower was illuminated in pink as a symbol of solidarity, while the group extended its support to Pink Ribbon Pakistan and Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer

Hospital through SMS broadcasts and digital campaigns, urging people to contribute to life-saving initiatives. Additionally, an in-house awareness session was conducted for employees to educate them on early detection and prevention, reinforcing the importance of collective action in the fight against breast cancer.

Optel | ufone 4G



IT TAKES **2 MINUTES**  
TO GET YOURSELF CHECKED  
FOR A CANCER-FREE FUTURE



# MAA, THE DIGITAL EXPERT PTCL GROUP’S MOTHER’S DAY CAMPAIGN

Rimsha Afzal

Every year, Mother's Day arrives wrapped in flowers, cards, and heartfelt tributes—but the PTCL Group saw beyond the surface. In a society where mothers are revered as the backbone of families and communities, PTCL recognized an untapped opportunity to turn this day of appreciation into something far more impactful.

Instead of following the familiar script, the PTCL Group listened to a quieter story unfolding across homes in Pakistan — of mothers being misled by online scams, targeted by digital fraudsters, and left vulnerable due to a lack of awareness about online financial safety. These were not isolated incidents; they were growing signs of a much larger, often overlooked issue.

So this Mother's Day, the PTCL Group chose a different path. It launched a campaign

that didn't just celebrate mothers—it protected them. By raising awareness about digital fraud and equipping mothers with essential financial literacy and online safety tools, PTCL transformed a day of love into a movement of empowerment.

This was not just a campaign; it was a promise to stand by the women who have always stood by us.

Post-campaign surveys revealed a significant reduction in clickbait interactions, with the click-through rate (CTR) dropping from 2.47% to 1.06%, representing a 57% decrease in women clicking on deceptive ads. This shift indicated a positive change in digital behavior and increased awareness about online risks.

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# PROVISION OF SAFE DRINKING WATER IN FLOOD-AFFECTED BALOCHISTAN (24,000 LITERS DAILY FOR FLOOD-HIT COMMUNITIES)



During the devastating floods of 2023 that impacted Balochistan and Sindh, the PTCL Group demonstrated its commitment to supporting affected communities by partnering with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS). Funded by the PTCL Group, PRCS installed a state-of-the-art water filtration plant in Gwadar, one of the areas most severely affected by the floodwaters. This initiative was crucial in providing access

to safe and clean drinking water, which became scarce due to the destruction of infrastructure and contamination caused by the floods. By addressing this vital need, the PTCL Group and PRCS played a significant role in alleviating the suffering of the local population, ensuring that residents had access to a necessity for health and survival in the aftermath of the disaster.



# A DROP OF LIFE FOR THE PARCHED

Mubashir Fida

The 2024 torrential rains in the port city of Gwadar brought a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions, leaving behind a trail of devastation that continues to haunt people till today. Severe urban flooding submerged large parts of the city, displaced entire communities, destroyed homes and livelihoods, and washed away critical infrastructure. Freshwater sources were contaminated, pushing the population towards a public health crisis.

The unprecedented scale of devastation created an urgent and overwhelming demand for relief efforts from all quarters. As a responsible corporate citizen, the PTCL Group was among the first few organizations to respond to the humanitarian crisis. With water streams and underground reservoirs polluted by floodwaters, access to clean drinking water had become a matter of life and death for the communities, which is why, the

Group prioritized the provision of clean and healthy drinking water to the communities.

The PTCL Group called its trusted and reliable partner, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), who was already on ground with its emergency response teams and volunteers. With its vast infrastructure and enviable service track record, PRCS could share the daunting task amid challenging circumstances, especially when roads and communication networks were severely affected.

Nonetheless, our shared spirit of service prevailed, and we were able to provide up to 30,000 liters of safe drinking water daily for nearly a month to thousands of people in the Flood-affected city. Our effort was not just about meeting a basic human need, it was about restoring dignity and hope to those who had lost everything. The initiative mitigated people's

vulnerability to waterborne diseases and saved scores of precious lives, especially those of young children.

PTCL & Ufone 4G's collaboration with PRCS is a testament to the transformative potential of public-private partnerships in addressing complex humanitarian challenges. In a country where access to clean water remains a pressing issue, PTCL's efforts are a reminder that businesses can, and must, be a force for good. The PTCL group's social impact initiatives go beyond immediate relief, as the company has consistently demonstrated its commitment to sustainable development and social welfare. As we navigate the climate change-related challenges ahead, these efforts serve as an inspiration for more collaborative efforts to build a stronger, more resilient Pakistan.

# POLIO AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN COLLABORATION WITH UNICEF



Polio remains a significant public health challenge in Pakistan, one of only two countries in the world where the disease continues to persist. Recent reports highlight the presence of active cases, emphasizing the critical need for swift & comprehensive interventions to combat this devastating disease.

In response to this pressing issue, the PTCL & Ufone 4G have taken a proactive stance, aligning their resources & expertise with the National Emergency Operations Centre and the Government of Pakistan's efforts to eradicate polio. Leveraging their expansive communication networks & technological capabilities, both organizations

have launched a series of initiatives aimed at raising awareness about the importance of polio vaccination.

A cornerstone of their efforts is an extensive awareness campaign conducted by Ufone 4G across various districts nationwide. This campaign utilizes targeted messaging to educate communities about the dangers of polio and the vital role of vaccination in protecting children from this preventable disease. By engaging with diverse populations in both urban and rural areas, the campaign aims to overcome barriers such as misinformation and vaccine hesitancy.

As a polio worker, I've often faced hesitation and distrust. People are unsure, sometimes even unwilling to listen. But this time, it was different. When we arrived, they already knew why we were there. Ufone 4G's awareness messages had prepared them, making our job easier and ensuring more children received the protection they needed. And I can definitely say that even a little awareness can make a significant difference."

Kinza Iftikhar





# PARTNERSHIP WITH CONNECTHEAR

## PAKISTAN'S FIRST AI POWERED EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR THE DEAF COMMUNITY



The PTCL Group partnered with ConnectHear for a project aimed at transforming disaster response for Deaf communities across the country. Backed by funding from the GSMA Innovation Fund for Humanitarian Challenges, the initiative will utilize innovative AI technology to ensure that Deaf individuals have access to life-saving information during emergencies such as floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters.

In Pakistan, where over ten million people are Deaf or hard of hearing, the need for inclusive

communication tools during emergencies is critical. Recent reports show that Pakistan is amongst the ten most affected countries by climate-related disasters, with over thirty million people impacted by severe floods in 2022 alone. During such disasters, communication networks are often disrupted, and vital information fails to reach those who need it most. This creates significant risks for Deaf individuals, who are frequently excluded from early warning systems due to communication barriers.

To address this, the Ufone 4G - ConnectHear partnership will focus on enhancing ConnectHear's virtual interpretation services to function in low-connectivity environments and developing an AI-powered system that automatically generates early warning messages in sign language. These advancements will allow Deaf individuals to receive critical, real-time updates during emergencies, bridging the gap in disaster communication for this underserved segment of the population.

## EMPOWERING YOUNG LEARNERS PTCL GROUP DISTRIBUTED SCHOOL BAGS TO CHOLISTAN'S MOBILE SCHOOL STUDENTS

The PTCL Group, under its social impact platform DIL SE, distributed school bags to primary students studying in mobile schools of Cholistan through the Punjab Education Foundation, reaffirming its commitment to education and community development. These

mobile schools serve as a beacon of hope for children in remote desert areas, ensuring access to quality learning opportunities. By providing essential school supplies, the PTCL Group aims to empower young learners, encourage school retention, and support their academic journey.



# BREAKING BARRIERS

## Hamza Bin Tahir

In a groundbreaking collaboration, Ufone 4G and Peshawar Zalmi have come together to champion women's empowerment through the Zalmi Women's League. This remarkable initiative transcends the boundaries of cricket, offering young women a platform to defy societal norms, highlight their talent, and dream big. Ufone 4G's unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity and progress, combined with Peshawar Zalmi's dedication to nurturing talent, has paved the way for a brighter future for women in sports across Pakistan.

With the support of Ufone 4G, Peshawar Zalmi organized a much needed and meticulously planned trial phase, conducted across colleges and universities in the seven divisions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Each division formed a team, with Peshawar fielding two teams due to the overwhelming turnout of female players from the region. Altogether, 120 players participated in the tournament, which was structured into two groups and featured fifteen matches in total. This approach reflected the tournament's primary goal: providing maximum exposure to emerging talent through competitive play.

At the heart of this initiative are three emerging cricketers: Ayesha from Lakki Marwat, Salma from Malakand, and Manahil from Swat. Their stories reflect the strength of dreams, the power of resilience, and the profound impact of support, displaying how individual aspirations can lead to collective transformation within Pakistani society.

Ayesha grew up in Lakki Marwat, where playing sports for girls was once unimaginable. Yet, in 11th grade, she stepped onto the cricket field, realizing instantly that this was her calling. Her father, initially hesitant, became her strongest supporter, shielding her from her strict elder brothers, once he saw her playing in the field. "You take care of your bat and your books; I will take care of the rest", was his stance, she recalled. Balancing cricket

by day and studies by night, Ayesha's dedication led her to represent Pakistan in Under-19 cricket within a few years. A left-handed batter inspired by Fakhar Zaman, her excellence extends to academics as well, having scored 1041 out of 1100 in her F.Sc. exams. Determined to reshape Pakistan's image, she dreams of inspiring young women by proving that sports and education can thrive together. She also aspires to break the barriers of communication redefining how the world sees her country, "I wish to be a learned cricketer who can represent Pakistan at all the international platforms, without facing any language barrier", she committed.

Along the same belt, in the picturesque valley of Swat, Manahil grew up in circumstances quite different from Ayesha's. Defying expectations, she perfected her competitive edge by challenging and playing with boys in her neighborhood. But societal resistance grew stronger as she got older, ultimately forcing her to leave her hometown, "It's hard to focus on your passion when you're not supported morally," she spoke about the financial and societal pressures as they weigh heavily on her dreams. Now living in a boarding facility in Peshawar, with only her father's support, Manahil has not only sharpened her cricketing skills but also earned fifteen medals in athletics and volleyball after moving to the city, proving her excellence across other sports. "Events like the Zalmi Women's League reignite my hope, reminding me that women's cricket is a dream worth pursuing and that I am not alone in this struggle", Manahil commented, viewing Zalmi Women's League as a ray of hope in her rather challenging circumstances.

The collaboration between Ufone 4G and Peshawar Zalmi is about far more than cricket; it is about breaking barriers, challenging norms, and creating opportunities for young women to excel.

Salma Ali, from the mountainous region of

Malakand, is a testament to this vision, having grown up with a passion for cricket and athletics but no opportunities to pursue them. "My school had no sporting facilities for girls, not even a conversation or awareness about the need for them," she reflected on the challenges. "However, my father never treated me any differently than my brothers," she credited her father's support for fueling her determination to dream beyond the confines of her surroundings. That dream took shape when the Peshawar Zalmi Scouts visited her school, and for the first time, she held a cricket bat. Her natural talent was undeniable, catching the coaches' attention instantly. Today, Salma dreams of representing Pakistan on the world stage and is already inspiring young girls in Malakand.

By providing resources, mentorship, and a platform to highlight their talent, Zalmi Women's League is empowering individuals like Ayesha, Salma, and Manahil while inspiring communities to embrace progress and inclusivity.

At the core of these inspiring stories lies the quiet yet profound support of their fathers, whose belief in their daughters marks a significant societal shift. Stories of these inspiring girls are just the beginning of a movement that promises to redefine the role of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and beyond. Through this initiative, Ufone 4G and Peshawar Zalmi are proving that no dream is too big, and no boundary is too wide to cross.



## Voices Through Silence Azima's Story of ConnectHear

### Sabahat Afsheen

"ConnectHear isn't just an initiative; it's a social enterprise built on an ethical sustainability framework ensuring long-term impact rather than temporary aid"—Azima Dhanjee said.

She is the Co-Founder and CEO of ConnectHear. Growing up with Deaf parents, Azima Dhanjee knew she wanted to make a difference for the Deaf community in Pakistan, though she had been interpreting for the Deaf community since she was 11, but at 18 - her mind constantly revolved around one thought—how can I create real change?

Encouraged by her mother, she joined IBA in 2016 and pursued a BBA in Entrepreneurship. Two semesters in, she pitched her first business idea—ConnectHear. Unlike her peers, she skipped the traditional summer internship & instead started approaching people with her idea. What started as a simple Facebook page soon became a movement. Graduating in December 2020,

she leveraged her business school network to expand ConnectHear's impact.

When asked about ConnectHear's success parameters, she commented: "The goal is clear: making public and private spaces fully accessible for people with disabilities, especially the Deaf community. Though the ConnectHear app measures the number of people benefiting from it, our philosophy is that success isn't measured by numbers alone but by real change—a Deaf person confidently attending a job interview, a mother engaging in her child's parent-teacher meeting, or, on a larger scale, corporations actively seeking to learn sign language. These are the success parameters that truly count for us."

"Now, with Ufone's partnership, ConnectHear's mission is set to reach even greater heights, ensuring communication access for all," Azima said with determination.

