The U.S.-Pakistan Women’s Council
Achievements January – June 2015

Mission: To Increase Women’s Economic Participation in Pakistan

Strategic Objectives:
• Foster Entrepreneurship - through small to medium enterprises that develop women as leaders and create jobs
• Increase Employment - by public and private entities to empower women economically and strengthen institutions
• Promote Education for Women and Girls - secondary and university education, skills and leadership training, mentoring and internships that prepare girls and women for economic success and leadership

Executive Summary

During the first half of 2015, the U.S.-Pakistan Women’s Council positioned itself for greater impact by approving a strategic plan with performance metrics, establishing a corporate membership process, and creating cooperation guidelines for its partners. Friends of the Council, Ambassadors, and Embassies in both countries facilitated Council efforts. In Pakistan, bilateral trade and investment week in Islamabad advanced public and private sector cooperation. New programs began, successful pilots expanded, and companies explored cooperation. Experts and practitioners in Islamabad and Karachi informed Council strategy and implementation. In the United States, visiting Pakistani officials suggested collaboration, and the Council’s Executive Committee reviewed achievements and approved a strategic plan. The Council expects to soon welcome corporate members, strengthen its networking platform, and systematize impact reporting.

Renewed Commitment and Institutional Development

In March, the U.S. State Department and American University (AU) renewed the 2012 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) forming the Council in cooperation with the Pakistani Diaspora. The Council brought new partners to its network, which includes the Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistani and U.S. government entities, and influential business associations in Pakistan. In June, the Executive Committee1 met and approved a new strategic plan reflecting consultations with over 200 stakeholders in both countries. The plan forged consensus on priorities and introduced performance metrics to spotlight impacts and build momentum. By June, vetting and approval of Coca Cola, Engro, PepsiCo and Procter & Gamble as initial corporate members neared completion.2 “Friends of the Council”3 and co-branding guidelines devised in consultation with stakeholders aim to coordinate cooperation on Council objectives.

Bilateral Economic Cooperation

At the January Strategic Dialogue in Islamabad, U.S. Secretary of State Kerry expressed pride in our bilateral economic cooperation through the Council. November Private sector consultations in Pakistan had identified corporate hiring and supply chains as potential catalysts to increase women’s inclusion in the formal economy. In March, the Executive Director led additional Council consultations on these in Islamabad and Karachi with business associations, company executives, women entrepreneurs, business advocacy NGOs, and education and training experts. Corporate participants affirmed the business case for women’s inclusion, explained challenges, and agreed to explore supply chain opportunities for women owned businesses. Participants also advised linking greater numbers of qualified women candidates to corporate opportunities through information sharing. The Council also co-sponsored a new CIRCLE corporate women’s leadership

1 The Executive Committee is co-chaired by U.S. State Department Global Women’s Issues Ambassador at Large, Catherine Russell, and American University President Neil Kerwin. Senior State and AU officials, a Pakistani Diaspora organization (currently OPEN), a rotating private sector member (currently the U.S.-Pakistan Business Council), and the Executive Director comprise the full Committee.

2 Due to U.S. State Department participation and support, vetting and approval of non-federal entities to avoid conflicts of interest is required before the Executive Committee may approve Council membership.

3 Again, due to State Department participation, U.S. regulations governing the advisory boards of federal entities would impose complex and burdensome procedures, should the title of “Advisor” continue to be used.
initiative and U.S.-Pakistan Alumni Network (PUAN) and Women and Technology events on International Women's Day.

Public sector cooperation received a boost at the March Pakistan-U.S. Business Opportunities Conference in Islamabad featuring government officials and over 100 companies. Pakistan's Additional Secretary of Commerce brought the Council’s Executive Director and a successful woman entrepreneur Council Friend onto a women’s entrepreneurship plenary panel. The Friend also spotlighted supply chain access barriers at the U.S. Commerce Secretary’s meeting with local women entrepreneurs. Council leadership attended Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) talks that included bilateral 2014 MOU on Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment implementation. In April, a Pakistani National Assembly delegation facilitated by U.S.-based Friends of the Council invited cooperation with the Women’s Caucus. U.S. commercial law experts also provided Pakistani and Afghan women entrepreneurs with Council co-sponsored business and trade capacity building at the WECREATE/Pakistan center in Islamabad.

Program Implementation and Impacts

The U.S.-Pakistan Women’s Council functions as a networking platform. Members and cooperators manage innovative activities that aim to achieve a demonstration effect and build momentum. By linking efforts, sharing information and facilitating coordination, the Council seeks to build synergies and multiply impacts.

New entrepreneur pilot programs include the Islamabad WECREATE/Pakistan women entrepreneur resource center that opened in February, which aims to launch or expand 500 women's businesses by 2018. By June, the center had recruited and trained 45 successful business mentors, and had strengthened 52 women's businesses. 19 startups had been launched, creating 30 new jobs. Overall, 5,000 women had participated in expert trainings, information sessions, showcases, competitions and campaigns, with another 3,000 people reached via Face book. In April, the Lahore University of Management Sciences hosted the AU Project Director and AU faculty to finalize SME (small to medium) enterprise curriculum modules for a Pakistan Women Entrepreneur Program (PWEIP) certificate program. By December, 60 women are expected to receive support. Coordination with new USAID SME and vocational training programs is also expected.

Ongoing Council programs also expanded their impact. This year, prominent U.S. colleges and universities hosting the Summer Sisters program since 2013 doubled the number of scholarships provided, citing how Pakistani girls had enriched their programs. Based on results reporting, the Summer Sisters program has inspired and equipped underprivileged Pakistani high school girls to pursue a broader range of higher education and career options back in Pakistan. Also this year, a successful Packages Limited of Lahore summer internship program founded in 2012 by a senior Council Friend was doubled in size to provide 40 women college students with marketable skills and experience tailored to enhance areas of interest.

Next Steps

American University has offered to host a winter Executive Committee meeting. During the second half of 2015, the Council expects to finalize corporate commitments and welcome new corporate members at a high level event. The Council hopes to celebrate commitments and impacts at an anniversary event, and intends to explore new secondary education and vocational training pilot activities. The Council team aims to work with public and private sector stakeholders in both countries to strengthen the Council’s network as a consultation and coordination platform, able to facilitate synergies and multiply impacts. Program partners are expected to help establish streamlined impact reporting in order to reinforce the momentum towards achieving our mission. In these ways, the Council intends to position itself for even greater impacts in 2016.

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4 Babson, Barnard, George Washington, Harvard, Smith, Vassar. Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins and Washington College are also among the private sector institutions in both countries seeking to cooperate with the Council.
Islamabad, January 13:
"I am particularly proud of our cooperation through the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council"

-- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry with Pakistan's National Security and Foreign Affairs Advisor Sartaj Aziz at the Strategic Dialogue Ministerial


(Left, at a Dean's Discussion for students with Council Executive Committee Member and American University School of International Studies Dean James Goldgeier, who also oversees the Council Secretariat at AU).

Islamabad, February 13: Council Co-Sponsored WECREATE/Pakistan Women’s Entrepreneurial Center Opens

"This center has enormous potential. It will help women overcome some of the barriers they encounter in Pakistan and develop initiatives that increase opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs to start and grow their own businesses. It will maximize public-private partnerships to increase women’s participation in the economy and implement community-based programs to spur economic growth and innovation."

– U.S. Ambassador Richard C. Olson

Council Co-Chair and U.S. Global Women's Issues Ambassador-at-Large Catherine Russell welcomed the State Department-funded, self-sustaining Center via video. U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson, U.S. Special Commercial and Business Affairs Representative Scott Nathan, Pakistan's Additional Commerce Secretary Robina Ather, and The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Vice President Mansoor Malik also spoke.
Karachi, February 26-27:
Council Co-Sponsored CIRCLE Women’s Corporate Leadership Initiative Begins

Co-founders, Council Friend Sadaffe Abid and facilitator Kelly Rappuchi (middle right) draw on the Harvard Adaptive leadership model to help advance women’s leadership within corporations. The Role of the CEO and Human Resource divisions were among strategies explored by senior executives and women corporate employees attending the conference from Standard Chartered Bank, Engro, L’Oreal, Tameer Bank, Habib Bank, Sina Trust and others.

"This is the first of a number of WECREATE Centers being launched by the U.S. Department of State to empower women and promote entrepreneurship globally.” - State Department Media Note
Karachi, March 7:

Council Co-Sponsored NEST i/o International Women’s Day Online Technology Workshop for Women Entrepreneurs

The event was organized by Council Friend Sabeen F. Haque with GBG Women (formerly Google Women). Jehan Ara, CEO of Pakistan’s IT association, P@sha (front row, standing) hosted the event at P@sha’s tech startup incubator, the NEST i/o. Experts leading the sessions transferred online marketing and personal branding skills to over 60 women entrepreneurs, with content shared across the Council’s Pakistan network.

Islamabad, March 7-8:

Council Co-Sponsored Pakistan - U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) International Women’s Day International Women’s Empowerment Conference

U.S. Ambassador Olson welcomed PUAN members to a Council co-sponsored International Women’s Empowerment Conference attended by National Status of Women Commission Chairperson Khawar Mumtaz, U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Deputy Judith Ravin (top left) and Public Affairs conference coordinator Jameson DeBose, as well as USPWC Executive Director Melanie Bixby and Kimberlee LeBlanc.
Islamabad, March 9-13: Council Participates in Business Opportunities Conference
Women’s Entrepreneurship Plenary Panel

Islamabad, March 11: The Women in the Pakistani Economy: Strategies for Success Business Opportunities Conference plenary panel with 100+ companies in attendance provided a platform to share Council efforts and invite private sector cooperation. (from left) U.S. Embassy Gender Advisor Saba Ghori, Pakistan’s Additional Commerce Secretary Ather, Coca-Cola Beverages Director Shama Jabir, P@sha CEO Ara, Kashf COO Kamran Azim, Council Friend and Pronto Promo Lahore CEO Saulat Salahuddin, Council Executive Director Bixby, and Euro Industries Peshawar CEO Shemama Arbab shared lessons learned and previewed plans.

Islamabad, March 12: Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) talks also boosted the Council’s public sector outreach. Additional Commerce Secretary Ather (far left) invited input on regulatory reforms helpful to women, ED Bixby related Council efforts supporting the bilateral 2014 MOU on Women’s Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, and Pakistan’s Small to Medium Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDA) offered to explore cooperation with Council efforts.

The Pakistan Embassy’s Trade Minister, Khurram Agha (second from left) also helped facilitate Council participation in the week’s events.
Karachi, March 15-19: Council Consultations with Prospective Corporate Members and Influential Business Associations Affirmed and Informed the Council’s Strategic Plan

Islamabad: PepsiCo Head of Corporate Affairs Khurram Shah, with U.S.-Pakistan Business Council President & US-Pakistan Women’s Executive Committee Member Espie Jelalian.

Islamabad: Coca Cola Export Corporation Public Affairs & Communications Director Fahad Qadir with Council Executive Director Bixby and U.S. Ambassador Olson

Karachi: Procter & Gamble Media Sourcing Manager Giselle Samson and Communications Manager Claudia Manuel. P&G was the first Company to seek full Council Membership.

Engro Corporate Communications & Human Resources Director Naila Kassim. Engro was the first Pakistani company to seek full Council membership.

Consultations also included American Business Council President Aisha Kirmani.

CEO Kamran Mirza and Research Director Samir Amir of the Pakistan Business Council offered to provide PBC mentors for women entrepreneurs.

Overseas Investor Chamber of Commerce & Industry Deputy Secretary General Moin Mohajir and Chief Executive Abdul Aleem, here with U.S. Consulate Karachi Economic Officer Tennessee Carlton and ED Bixby, will explore coordination.
Karachi, March 18: A Small and Medium Enterprises roundtable brought women entrepreneurs together with corporate representatives, trainers and other experts to discuss how capacity building, finance, family and community support, and access to local supply chains and export markets can help sustain and grow women’s businesses.

Karachi, March 17: A Women in the Workplace roundtable brought company officials, business associations, OPEN Karachi, and advocacy, education and training experts together to discuss ways to recruit, retain, advance and re-employ women in the workforce, as well as the bottom line benefits women bring, and the need to provide career counseling beginning as early as at the secondary education level.

Karachi, March 16-19: Council Meetings and Roundtables on Entrepreneurship, Employment and Education Affirmed and Informed the Council’s Strategic Plan
Lahore, March 25: American University - LUMS Memorandum of Understanding Initiates the Pakistan Women Entrepreneurship Certificate Program (PWEP)

U.S. Consul General Lahore Zachary Harkenrider looked on as Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) Vice Chancellor Dr. Sohail Naqvi signed an MOU with American University implementing the U.S. Embassy funded PWEP partnership for a certificate program to help women scale up their businesses.

Lahore, April: Dr. Mohammad Sajjad Haider, visiting AU Project Manager Carrie Bodley-Bond, LUMS Project Director Dr. Misbah Tanveer and Dr. Ghasal Zulfiqar collaborated on PWEP course module design.


With USAID support, 50 Afghan and Pakistani women entrepreneurs from a variety of sectors gathered at the WECREATE/Pakistan Center for training sessions led by U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Specialist David Nufrio, U.S. Department of Commerce Commercial Law Development expert Megan McMillan (left, at the WECREATE Center with TiE Director Zaidi) and others. Participants also made business deals and forged trade linkages through matchmaking events.

Washington, April 13-17: Council Participates in National Assembly Delegation Meetings

To further boost public sector coordination on women’s economic empowerment, Council Friends, Convergence CEO Aakif Ahmad (far right) and PAKPAC President Rifat Chughtai, included the Council in MNA delegation meetings. Women’s Caucus members invited cooperation, and the Council was highlighted during the delegation’s meeting with U.S.-Pakistan Business Council companies, where Procter & Gamble Vice President Carolyn Brehm (middle left) and PepsiCo Government Affairs Director Kenny Thompson (middle left end of table next to USPBC President Jelalian) spoke of partnering with Women’s

daraz.pk Rocket Internet CEO Maayr, Online Retailer Zari CEO Faisal, Brand Crew Content Director Mansuri, and leading e-commerce expert Ravda shared online marketing and e-commerce insights with women entrepreneurs on a panel moderated by Brand journalist Khan at a NEST i/o-hosted workshop arranged by Council Friend Haque with Secret Stash CEO Hain in response to needs raised during the March Council SME roundtable discussion that Hain attended.

Washington, June 3: U.S.-Pakistan Women’s Council Executive Committee Meeting
Reviews Progress, Positions Council for Increasing Impact

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<tr>
<th>Samssa Ali</th>
<th>Council Program Coordinator, American University</th>
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<tr>
<td>Saqib Rizvi</td>
<td>Council Member, DC Board Member, Organization of Pakistani Entrepreneurs of North America</td>
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<td>Dr. James Goldgeler</td>
<td>Council Member, Dean, School of International Service, American University</td>
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<td>Dr. Neil Kerwin</td>
<td>Council Co-Chair, President, American University</td>
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<td>Amb. Catherine Russell</td>
<td>Council Member, Deputy Senior Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan State Department</td>
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<td>Jonathan Carpenter</td>
<td>Council Member, President, U.S.-Pakistan Business Council</td>
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<td>Espie Jelalian</td>
<td>Council Member, President, U.S.-Pakistan Business Council</td>
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<td>Melanie Bixby</td>
<td>Council Executive Director, State Department</td>
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✔ State-AU Founding MOU Renewed
✔ 2015-16 Strategic Plan Approved
✔ Program Implementation Reviewed (new program example below)
✔ Corporate Membership Process Briefed
✔ Cooperation Guidelines Approved

Impact Report No. 1 Feb – June

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<tr>
<th>No. of Master Mentors Trained</th>
<th>No. of Operating Startups</th>
<th>Total Jobs Created Thus Far</th>
<th>No. of Mentors Recruited and Trained</th>
<th>No. of Women Supported/Outreached (Through 30+ Events)</th>
<th>Total Existing Businesses Assisted</th>
<th>Total New Startups Launched</th>
<th>Total People Impacted (Includes Social Media)</th>
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Pakistan, March 10-19: Many Thanks to Diaspora and Local Friends of the Council, the Pakistan Embassy, and the U.S. Mission for Enabling and Assisting Consultations and Outreach in Pakistan

Karachi: Friends of the Council facilitated and helped evaluate critical stakeholder input during March meetings and roundtables in Karachi. (from left) CIRCLE Co-Founder and women’s leadership trainer and consultant Sadaf Abid; corporate, donor program and women’s entrepreneurship trainer and consultant Sabeen Haque, who initiates multiple Council efforts; and DIC Pakistan Limited Chair and Packages Limited Advisor, Syeda Henna Babar Ali. Mrs. Syeda Ali, in addition to doubling a Packages Limited women’s internship in 2015 and making it perpetual, was instrumental in contributing to new strategy and processes.

Karachi: Previous Ambassador to the United States and honorary Friend of the Council, Senator Sherry Rehman, met with ED Bixby and Consulate Economic Team members Carlton (left) and Political Economic Chief Chad Peterson.

Islamabad: Council Friend Saulat Salahuddin, who shared her experiences as Pronto Promo CEO during March economic week, with Council Executive Committee Member DSRAP Jonathan Carpenter, who oversees the State Department’s Pakistan Office.

Islamabad: Council activities are supported by U.S. Embassy Economic Team members: (far left) Economic Deputy Susan McFee, USPWC Kim LeBlanc, Economic Chief Daniela Ballard and Economic Officer Marc Miller (below), who led preparations for the March women’s plenary panel with U.S. Embassy Gender Advisor Saba Ghori (far right). Embassy and Consulate Public Affairs Officers and their staffs also support Council programs and activities.
Looking to improve female workforce numbers

By Mehek Ameer

Published: March 20, 2015

US-Pakistan Women’s Council making efforts to train women.

PHOTO: MEHAK AMEER

KARACHI: With only 22% of women making up Pakistan’s workforce, the US-Pakistan Women’s Council has teamed up with stakeholders to increase women’s economic participation in the country through entrepreneurship, employment and education.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Executive Director of the US-Pakistan Women’s Council Melanie J Bixby expressed her keenness to increase economic opportunities for women in Pakistan with support from the Organisation for Pakistani Entrepreneurs.

In a private-public partnership between the US State Department and American University, the council has taken several initiatives to achieve their mission of encouraging more Pakistani women to enter the workforce through empowerment.

"Women are a development multiplier. Income in the hands of women is a development multiplier," Bixby said.

As times are changing, Bixby ascertained that more girls are being able to complete their education and are entering the workforce. Sharing her experience as a woman with a demanding career at the State Department, Melanie said her family helped her raise her child.

Responding to a question about the interests of the US initiating such projects in Pakistan, Bixby said, “Investment is a key to success in any country,” adding that being a key partner, the US is engaged with Pakistan on a broad range of issues.

A shorter version of this article was published in The Express Tribune, March 20th, 2015.

US Consulate Karachi Spokesman Brian Asmus arranged interviews, and U.S. Mission media staff throughout Pakistan pushed Council information out on social media, as did LUMS, iEarn, the WE CREATE/Pakistan Center and other local and program partners.