Transforming Ideas Into Digital News Platforms

PakJ Entrepreneurial Journalism Program

Global Neighbourhood For Media Innovation
Preface

Journalism and entrepreneurship are merging into a new field altogether. A shift in journalism practices is evident across the world through increased utilization of digital technologies and social media platforms by freelance journalists and activists. They are changing the news media landscape by telling stories of local interests with a global perspective without affiliating themselves with any news organization while keeping their new authentic, responsible, and relevant. They, now, have multiple platforms on the internet which they can use to disseminate their content directly into their target audience alongside building revenue opportunities.

Identifying the need for Pakistan’s journalist community to adopt and take advantage of this new form of journalism amidst news media situation, financial instability and layoffs, Global Neighbourhood for Media Innovation (GNMI) introduced Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program (PEJP) in the year 2021 in collaboration with the U.S. Consulate General Karachi to instill relevant knowledge and skills within Pakistani journalists.

PEJP aims to guide journalists, independent news bloggers/vloggers, and digital news content creators through the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and the avenues it can provide to journalists for their work on digital platforms. The main objective of Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program is to increase journalists’ autonomy and financial independence by providing them essential training and resources to launch their own independent digital news outlets.

In year 2020-2021, PEJP recruited and provided foundational entrepreneurial journalism training to 66 journalists from across Pakistan. Among them, 20 were provided advanced technical training, mentoring and small grants to materialize their niche digital news platforms into reality.

PEJP 2021 (inaugural) cohort is the steppingstone for start of this journey. GNMI aims to build on its results and further expand the program for greater impact and sustainability.

The aim of this publication is to promote entrepreneurial journalism and document the successful implementation of PEJP 2021 as it not only explains our methodology of implementing the program but takes the reader to our journey since its inception to conclusion of its inaugural cohort.

We, GNMI, aim to carry the program forward in more innovative and creative ways in coming years.
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**Introduction**

**Digital Media Landscape in Pakistan**

The developments in digital media have changed the journalism industry all around the globe and contributed to journalistic independence, autonomy, and sustainability. This trend is more visible in the west, where media organizations and journalists have been using technological advancements in digital media in their work for years, transforming their traditional business and working models with innovation into sustainable and independent models. However, the media industry in developing countries like Pakistan is still on its way to explore new trends. The media organizations have set up their digital desks creating content for their digital platforms, but journalists are a bit reluctant in taking the risk of cutting off ties with big giants and starting their own new digital news startups by taking full editorial and financial independence.

**The Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program**

Considering the impact of digital technologies on journalism, Global Neighbourhood for Media Innovation (GNMI) has launched the Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program (PEJP) in collaboration with the U.S. Consulate General Karachi in September 2020. PEJP’s primary objective is to increase Pakistani journalist’s capacity to create & distribute unbiased, nuanced and responsible news content on digital platforms from which they can monetize their work, thereby reducing the dependency on government-sponsored advertising, as well as broadening the scale and number of independent digital news platforms in Pakistan.

The program consists of 2 levels. Level 1 activities include engagement and enrollment of broader regional cohorts of participants and building their foundational knowledge about entrepreneurial journalism and imparting skills necessary to a) plan, launch and grow digital news startups and b) develop ethical, responsible and attractive digital content for an array of digital platforms. This is done through a series of boot-camp trainings. While level 2 aims at working with a smaller, select group of cohort members to impart advanced knowledge and practical skills and tools, provide support through small grants, mentoring and individual technical assistance to establish and launch quality digital news startups contributing to digital media landscape of Pakistan.

**PEJP 2021**

Till date, the program has provided essential training and resources to three regional cohorts of sixty-six journalists from across Pakistan enabling them to contribute in digital news media in Pakistan through independent and responsible digital news content. Twenty best startups from these three cohorts are among the inaugural cohort that received small grants, advanced technical training and one-on-one mentoring to develop, enhance and grow their DNPs.
Considering the protracted Covid-19 situation, GNMI has introduced a virtual learning management system (LMS) to address capacity development needs of the digi-journos partaking in PEJP. This LMS is better known as Media Incubation Center and Accelerator Platform (MICAP). It serves as a single resource online portal for the participants of the program.

The inaugural cohort of PEJP has produced twenty digital news startups as direct result of the technical and capacity building support provided by the program. PEJP has launched these startups on August 26, 2021 during a virtual capstone ceremony. The thematic focus of these startups includes gender, localized digital news, climate change, wildlife, economy, social issues, human rights, child rights, animal rights and persons with disabilities.

These startups have received positive reviews and have been deemed necessary in the evolution of media landscape in the country by key industry leaders in digital media, entrepreneurship, journalism, branding, marketing, and monetization in Pakistan. Media has also positively covered the progress and outcomes of PEJP that has helped in building its credibility and rapport in the journalist community.

Engagement & Enrollment (Ex2) Strategy – It’s No Secret!

Considering the pioneering nature of the program and common skepticism around such programs within journalist community, GNMI has sketched a comprehensive Ex2 (Engagement & Enrollment) strategy with elements of advocacy and communications at its core. Ex2’s primary purpose is to achieve desired level of participation by journalists, bloggers/vloggers and digital content creators.

We have kept the blueprint of Ex2 simple – raise awareness among the journalist community about the program, build discourse around entrepreneurial journalism, create momentum with digital campaigning, reach across media canvas in Pakistan with media organizations and press clubs and make the enrollment process as easy as possible while ensuring availability of guidance and support to the applicants.

Ex2 produced excellent results in its first rollout during the year 2020 with a total of 194 applications (see annex), 300% more than reserved space were received from journalists, bloggers/vloggers and digital content creators all over Pakistan (Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir).

Following are the activities we conducted to implement Ex2 during 2021.

1. Content Development

Under this activity, we first set out to outline the whole process of communication and the content (written and graphic) to be prepared to fulfill needs of the program.

First, program’s identity and entire creative theme was developed for use throughout the digital campaigns and other activities.
The following two sub-activities were also conducted during content development.

1.1 Call for Applications Development
During this activity, content of call for applications and an application form, in Urdu and English languages, were developed considering the nature of the program and target audience. Furthermore, a detailed introduction and guideline document for the prospective applicants was also developed. A script for a how-to-video for filling the application form was also developed.

1.2 Website Portal Development
A portal on GNMI website was commissioned to host the call for applications. The purpose of this portal was to give easy access of all required information about the project and the online application to the prospective applicants. Another objective of this portal was to avoid human errors and ensure confidentiality and privacy during the application process. An online application form (in Urdu & in English), a video how-to guide for filling the application form to assist the applicants and a trainers’ intro was incorporated in this portal.

The application went live at GNMI website on (https://gnmionline.org/entrepreneurial-journalism).

2. Digital Campaign
PEJP and its call for applications were highlighted on social media through an extensive digital campaign derived from communications and outreach strategy developed during October 2020.
It comprised of frequent social media activity on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. The audience was engaged throughout the call for applications duration (November/December 2020) through 7 posts with digital flyers on social media channels.
Another aspect of the campaign was implementation of digital engagement strategy. This included a TweetChat followed by a live webinar with industry leaders of Pakistan in journalism, entrepreneurism, digital and social media, and technology.

2.1 TweetChat – November 20, 2020
The purpose of this TweetChat was to raise awareness about the project and bring clarity among prospective applicants from journalist community regarding its scope, target audience and online application process. #AskGNMI was tweeted and retweeted 352 times by leading journalists during the time of TweetChat including 39 questions from prospective applicants. The TweetChat received total 4,722,578 live views with an economic value of $6,251. The impact of #AskGNMI crossed the massive figure of 8.5 million. The reach of the hashtag was nine hundred thousand.
Apart from comments & QnA, the hashtag #AskGNMI became No.4 top trend in Pakistan holding the spot way after the event wrap-up.
Innovation is the new normal in #media #Journalism. @Gnmlonline has launched a new Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program for niche media creators — now open for applications. #AskGNMI #GEW2020 Check out the details at

Entrepreneurial Journalism
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS The developments in digital media have changed the journalism industry all around the globe and... gnmlonline.org

11:50 PM · Nov 20, 2020 · TweetDeck

Launch your own independent digital #news startup in Pakistan. @Gnmlonline is inviting applications for Pakistan Entrepreneurial #Journalism Program. Use #AskGNMI to ask your questions. #GEW2020

11:46 PM · Nov 20, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Many websites were launched in recent months. Sustainable revenue model/funding, quality content, finding niche should be the focus

6:05 PM · Nov 21, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone
Abdul Wasay @Wasay001 · Nov 20
@Gnmlonline your course is free or paid?

GNMI @Gnmlonline · Nov 20
This is a free of cost program. We will provide necessary trainings and seed money in the second phase to support digital news outlets of the selected participants.

@Gnmlonline
 صحافيون كم معاشي طور بر خود مختار، د.جيجتيت بليث فارم بر آزاد ايدينوريل الاليسي كساتهم معياري مواد بناء کے لیے تریینگ اور فندز هرام. پر میڈیا کے دوست ابلائی کریب د.جيجتيت صحافی کا وقت آجکا یہ خود کو تیار کریں.

#GEW2020 #startups #news #journalism #AskGNMI

Aoun Sahi @AounSahi
Making independent digital #news startup sustainable will be more challenging than launching them. Will the program incorporate sustainability aspect? #AskGNMI

Najia Ashar @najiaashar · 13h
Replies to @AounSahi
We are trying to empower journalists through capacity building. Yes, the program is focused on providing opportunities to the journalists who have lost their jobs.
#AskGNMI

11:51 PM · Nov 20, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone
6 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 16 Likes

Usman Manzoor @usmanmanzoor
We ensure sustainability through different phases of the program. We will equip and build startups through training sessions and we will also provide seed money to support their outlets in their starting phase.

@AounSahi
Aoun Sahi

@SabookhSyed
Sabookh Syed

@FatimaSaleem84
Fatima.saleem

@AmirSaeedAbbasi
Aamir Saeed Abb...
### 2.2 Webinar – November 26, 2020

The purpose of the webinar was to discuss the project in detail with a hint of why we need entrepreneurial journalism at this crucial time when the media industry in Pakistan is suffering amid the COVID-19 pandemic and political instability. Another purpose of the webinar was to give the interested applicants an opportunity to ask them questions about the big move – from mainstream media to digital platforms to try their luck in entrepreneurship. The webinar panel included Ms. Marjan Arbab (Manager, National Incubation Centre), Aoun Sahi (Senior Journalist), Najia Ashar (Founder GNMI) and Badar Khushnood (Co-founder Bramerz). Following key-take aways were shared by the panelists.

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**Digital media has democratized the media industry in the entire world. Everyone is a contributor and content creator, but the challenge is to manage it every day. Each digital platform has its own strategy for content creation. Other than that, the content creators should have their own hybrid strategy to grow in digital domains. (Badar Khushnood)**

**A private TV channel may issue a notice to its employees who run their own YouTube channels to shut them down or to resign from their positions. But journalists should choose their channels over their jobs as it gives them more autonomy and freedom in their work. That is what a journalist wants. PEJP could become a solution to the media crisis, but journalists will have to take the first step. (Aoun Sahi)**

**Technical details, such as website development and brand strategy, are not hard to learn. If one is focused, they can learn those with time. One thing one must keep in their mind is that this whole process will take its own time, but I can guarantee you that your hard work will pay off if you are using it in the right direction.” (Marjan Arbab)**
Level 01 Cohorts’ Selection and Announcement

A standardized process is adapted for evaluating and shortlisting the PEJP applicants to ensure quality and equality. As part of this process, an independent peer review committee (PRC) is constituted. PRC has its own terms of reference (TORs) ensuring its autonomy and specifying criteria for selection. PRC also ensures privacy, confidentiality, and respect of applicants and protection of their pitched ideas.

As a result of successful implementation of our Ex2 strategy, we received an overwhelming response to the PEJP call for applications. A total of 194 applications were received, which included journalists, digital content creators, independent bloggers, and vloggers from across the country.

It was difficult to say the least, said one of our selection members after the selection process was over. There were just too many great ideas and niches presented in the applications that even with a systemic procedure in place, which focused more on data and ideas to sort the promising candidates, the selection committee found the evaluations challenging many times and lengthy discussions ensued on picking the suitable candidates. Also, applicants’ heart wrenching stories of struggle and impediment amidst the media crisis made this job very hard for the committee members.

The committee selected 66 applications for the program after a rigorous review and vetting process. We divided the participants into three cohorts that were later trained in Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad. The participants of these cohorts came from all over Pakistan, including Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu, and Kashmir with their exceptional ideas and niches to the program. The Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad level 1 cohorts were announced on social media with flyers on December 21, 2020, December 23, 2020 and December 26, 2020 respectively.

Training Manual Development

To provide sustainable assistance in building capacity of PEJP level 1 cohorts’ members GNMI has also developed a training manual, a practioners’ guide of sorts, that they can use beyond their engagement with the program. The manual is also available online at GNMI’s website for the benefit of journalist community at large.

The lead trainers and experts from journalism, digital media, entrepreneurism, business, technology, and monetization have worked together with the team members of GNMI to develop this comprehensive practitioner’s guide for participants of the trainings.
The manual aims to facilitate in grasping the process of strategizing a digital news media startup with proper business, marketing, & monetization planning. It also provides tools and techniques for content development, building digital news startups, marketing, & monetization of their products using international best practices & standards.

Its core components include:

a. **Fundamental Concepts of Entrepreneurial Journalism**

b. **Online Content Creation**

c. **Establishing a News Startup**

d. **Marketing Strategy and Monetization Techniques**

The manual was used as a resource during the 2021 bootcamp trainngs.

### Level 1 – The Bootcamps

This is the next component in PEJP design. The purpose of the bootcamps is to establish fundamental concepts of entrepreneurial journalism, ethics, online content creation, production through mobile and photojournalism, establishing news startup, and marketing and monetization techniques so that the participants will be able to turn their raw startup ideas into practical business models. Even if they are not selected for the final cohort for advanced training, they will have the necessary tools and guidance to help them take their startup ideas to the next level. Bootcamps are led by industry experts from journalism, digital media, content creation, entrepreneurship and monetization fields.

#### Day 1

The first day of bootcamp segments on fundamentals of entrepreneurial journalism, digital content creation and digital news startups respectively. Participants indulge in different aspects of digital content creation, creating a news brand, and establishing, maintain and growing consumers of a digital news brand. Also, on the first day of the training, our trainers and guest speakers help the participants deep dive regarding ethical journalism in the digital age. We provide our cohort members the opportunity of hands-on learning in mobile journalism on the same day. Participants are also given extensive individual assignments and group tasks for practical understanding. Clarity of DNP vision, niche specific ethical guidelines and content selection for the DNP are the outcomes of day 1.

#### Day 2

Plan for the second day of bootcamp includes helping them understand digital media marketing, entrepreneurship and building digital news startups. Exercises include startup planning, business model development, blog writing, website development and hosting, search engine optimization, traffic generation techniques and blog monetization. 2nd day of bootcamps also includes creating Vlogs using YouTube, relevant tips and tricks, strategies to grow channel audience, and YouTube monetization requirements and strategies.
Outcome of day 2 includes a practical business plan for each participant’s DNP that can be pitched to any funding agency or venture capital.

Day 3
The final day of the PEJP bootcamp kicks-off with the understanding of the current digital media landscape in Pakistan. Business models for DNPs and using digital payments with DNPs is specialty of the day. Concepts of disruption, survival of the fastest and why startups fail to familiarize them with today’s fast paced startup models and digital needs are also clarified to participants. Knowledge of building brand loyalty through digital presence strategy and tools is also imparted. Marketing strategies, tools, business modeling and tools, design elements and budgetary implications in marketing, and how to choose peak days and time through data-driven informed decision making is also explained to the participants in this session. The participants also develop in-depth understanding of monetization tools for digital business, quality control processes, establishing credibility and understanding terms and conditions of different digital platforms for monetization on the very day before conclusion of bootcamp. Practical and DNP specific marketing and monetization strategies along with their DNP first portfolio are the outcomes of day 3 at bootcamp.

Following is the graphical illustration of compiled learning of all 3 cohorts.
The consolidated data shows an overall increase of 48% in already available professional, technical and business knowledge of entrepreneurial journalism among the participants. Among the major areas, following levels of knowledge increase were noted:
* 62% on topics related to marketing and monetization.
* 51% on topics related to establishing and growing startups in Pakistan.
* 28% on topics about online content creation and publishing.

A survey with cohorts’ participants was conducted to gather their feedback on whether (a) the trainings helped them and (b) will they be interested in applying for competitive small grants program under the project. Following are the survey results:
These results depict that:

a) Overall, 95% of 3 cohort trainings’ participants on average agree with the notions that trainings were helpful and they plan to submit their startup projects for competitive grants under the project.

b) In regards with whether the trainings were helpful, 77% (50) training participants strongly agreed that these trainings assisted them in their career and in improving their independent ventures, 20% (13) agreed with the same notion while 3% (2) disagreed.

c) Indicating their intention for applying to small grants, 78% (51) strongly agreed that they will be submitting project plans for the small grants program and 15% (10) agreed to the same notion while 7% (4) disagreed.

Level 2

At the conclusion of the bootcamps, the participants are invited through a call for proposals to apply for PEJP level 2 as well as a small grant to invest in their news startup. As before, an independent PRC carefully analyzes each application and shortlists eligible digital news startups based on completeness of application, availability of supporting details, idea, innovation, expertise and experience. The purpose of small grants is to further support the startups development level 2 of the program. The selection criteria are based on completeness of the application, availability of supporting details, idea, innovation, expertise, and experience. The 2021 PRC shortlisted 20 eligible startups after a rigorous screening and vetting process in response to 60 received applications. These 20 formed the PEJP 2021 Inaugural Cohort.

The Inaugural Cohort of PEJP

The participants of our inaugural cohort came from all parts of Pakistan, including all genders and ethnic groups. They brought with them amazing ideas of serving different communities living at different geographic points in Pakistan. We helped them turn their ideas into sustainable digital news startups.

Sheema Siddiqui
Journalist – Geo News
Karachi.

Delivering reliable, non-partisan, & essential news stories through ground-level reporting of the issues affecting the masses.

Safiullah Gul
Broadcast Journalist – Mera News TV Peshawar.

Engaging & entertaining masses with exquisite storytelling and surprising narratives in climate change, environment, archeology, & tourism from all over Pakistan.

Tanzila Raza Khan
Digital Content Creator/Activist – Lahore

Changing the perspective of the masses towards news about differently-abled individuals by covering the information gap around their lives with comical digital content.

Bushra Iqbal
Independent Journalist – Islamabad

Providing information, advice, and support services to parents with special children in their native language.

Raja Kamran
Senior Business Reporter – Neo TV Karachi.

Reaching the masses in Pakistan by sharing information about business, economy, and finance in Urdu.

Mansoor Hussain
Digital Content Creator/Activist – Jaffarabad

Building a youth-led, non-partisan, and reliable news platform covering youth of Balochistan and connecting them with opportunities in the region and beyond.
Khan Shehram Eusufzye
Independent Journalist – Lahore
Building a platform that serves the masses interested in news about the environment, climate change, wildlife, and conservation.

Rabia Umaima Ahmed
Journalist – Daily Times, Lahore
Educating children about animal rights and safety through animated video-based storytelling.

Naveed Ahmed
Digital Journalist – Islamabad
Connecting the residents of the Twin Cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi with reliable news and information about the socio-political structure around them.

Qadeer Ahmed
Digital Content Creator – Lahore
Telling essential news in bite-sized 50-words briefs to serve the information needs of the digital audience with a short attention span.

Sameer Ali
Independent Journalist/Activist – Thatta
Promoting harmony through storytelling and news about religious minorities of Sindh that have never been told before.

Naseem Shah
Digital Journalists – Faisalabad
Providing news and entertainment to the local community of Faisalabad.

Sameera Latif
Digital Journalists – Faisalabad
Providing news and entertainment to the local community of Faisalabad.

Zeenat Bibi
Digital Content Creator – Peshawar
Building a women-led news platform for women by telling their stories through advanced narrative techniques in digital media.

Sameera Latif
Digital Journalist – Dera Ismail Khan
Reaching out to women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to highlight their issues through compelling storytelling.

Kiran Qasim
Digital Journalist – Gilgit Baltistan
Delivering trustworthy information about winter tourism in Gilgit Baltistan through multimedia storytelling.

Nusrat Abbas
Digital Journalist – Dera Ismail Khan
Providing comprehensive multimedia coverage of the cultural heritage of Dera Ismail Khan to connect masses with their cultural history.

Raza Khan
Digital Journalist – South Waziristan
Bringing untold stories from the tribal regions of Pakistan to masses using multimedia storytelling techniques.

Syed Husnain Raza
Digital Content Creator – National Geographic, Rawalpindi
Engaging masses in wildlife and its conservation through innovative storytelling techniques using films.

Babar Javed Khan
Independent Investigative Journalist – Karachi
Providing exclusive news and happenings from the world of advertising to publishers, media, and digital agencies for their work.
Strategy Shift in Gaze of the 3rd Wave

PEJP was conceived in the pre-pandemic world. We devised a working strategy for the program for a world where meeting in person was normal and healthy, and not a threat to life. The bootcamps were arranged in physical spaces when the cases had gone under control. However, towards the end, the third wave of coronavirus in Pakistan made it almost impossible to arrange further in-person activities. Therefore, we revised the strategy of the program and switched from offline to online adhering to the safety precautions of the pandemic. We developed the Media Incubation Center and Acceleration Platform (MICAP), a virtual learning management system (LMS), to make the learning process safe, easier, inclusive and accessible for all PEJP participants.

Media Incubation Center & Acceleration Platform

MICAP is, in essence, a LMS that finds its roots in Moodle's Technological Framework and offers innovative and critical training courses in entrepreneurial journalism, with an extended scope of online mentoring, event management, and connectivity to incubation services.

What does it offer?

- Virtual courses and training content
- Access to startup services
- Performance evaluation dashboard
- Synchronous/asynchronous course delivery options
- Online mentoring
- Virtual event management

MICAP can be accessed through any device desktop computer, laptop, or smartphone/tablet due to its fluid and responsive design to fit all screen types. To keep the synchronous part of the learning process i.e. live lecture streaming, smooth and compatible with all types of bandwidth DSL/Fiber Optic to Mobile data, dual streaming application programming interfaces (APIs) are integrated into MICAP Jitsi and Google Meet to accommodate course attendees with all sorts of internet connections.

The courses offered by MICAP are designed to support independent journalism by helping journalists understand digital media, content creation, laws, and policies governing cyberspace and accounting. The aim is to provide tips and information on setting up and sustaining independent digital news outlets, in light of the growing pressures on the media industry, especially after the covid-19 pandemic.
PEJP Level 2 Cohort Kick-off

The PEJP level 2 cohort activities start with a kick-off event with cohort participants, local and international experts and GNMI team. The purpose of this event is to brief the cohort members about upcoming activities, learning formats, outcomes and expectations from them. They are also introduced with trainers and mentors they'll be engaged during upcoming activities.

The 2021 level 2 cohort kick-off event held doubly importance as it not only included abovementioned activities but also that MICAP was launched in this event. In fact, the whole event was hosted at MICAP using its virtual event management capabilities.

The event’s highlight was the participation of Jeremy Caplan (Director of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism) who is known to be the founding father of entrepreneurial journalism in the world. He spoke of the changes in the news media ecosystem especially in light of the covid-19 pandemic. He also highlighted various opportunities present in digital journalism and explained different business models to sustain news media startups. He appreciated the PEJP initiative by GNMI and encouraged the inaugural cohort members to keep pursuing their ideas.

Small Grants

The PEJP level 2 cohort participants are awarded small grants as seed money contributing to development and growth of their digital news platforms with knowledge gained from advanced trainings, mentoring and technical support provided by industry experts and GNMI. The amount of small grants varies depending upon available funds, but the primary purpose remains the same, to bridge the monetary gap in obtaining tools and services deem necessary for a DNP’s establishment and growth.

The PEJP inaugural cohort members were awarded small grants during 2021 to advance their DNPs.

The Deep Dive (2D) Strategy

PEJP level 2 is based on deep dive (2D) format of training. The major components of 2D are

- Advanced Technical Learning
- Self-Exploring
- Implementing Learning and Findings to Materialize Ideas

These components are delivered through

- Training Workshops
- One-on-One Mentoring
- Individual Focused Support from PEJP team

Ultimate product of 2D is that all participating cohort members have their DNPs up and running.
The training delivery is a mix of cognitive and participatory methods. It includes lectures, seminars, individual and group assignments, interactive subject assessments and self-evaluation of the participants.

We’ve identified the following technical areas best suited to enhance capacity of PEJP level 2 cohort members. We’ve developed extensive curriculum with input from industry experts in journalism, entrepreneurship, business, digital media and marketing fields. It includes course syllabus that also has case studies, worksheets and assignments for practice of participants. The course syllabus is also accompanied by presentations and videos to help participants further explore the subject areas of curriculum.

1. Digital Content Creation
2. Monetization Tools & Strategies
3. Digital Marketing Strategy
4. E-commerce in Digital News Media
5. Startup Accounting & Finance
6. Digital Security & Safety
7. Cyber Laws – Policies & Regulations

It is expected that with completion of the trainings that cohort members have established their DNPs and developed and broadcasted some content thereon.

Considering the Covid-19 3rd wave impact and government-imposed restrictions on in-person gatherings, during 2021 we implemented the 2D strategy through IMICAP so that PEJP inaugural cohort members could participate in activities easily from their remote locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S#</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Digital Content Creation</td>
<td>May 31 - June 2, 2021 and June 24 June 25, 2021</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Digital Marketing Strategy</td>
<td>June 9 – June 10, 2021</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>E-Commerce for News Media</td>
<td>June 11 – June 12, 2021</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Startup Accounting &amp; Finance - Basics</td>
<td>June 16 – June 18, 2021</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Digital Safety &amp; Security</td>
<td>June 15 – June 17, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cyber Laws, Polices &amp; Regulations</td>
<td>June 23 – June 26, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Monetization Tools &amp; Strategies</td>
<td>June 29 – June 30, 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An online survey was conducted to assess how helpful MICAP courses have been to the participants in developing their DNPs. According to the survey results, 55% participants indicated that these online courses were very helpful in developing their projects and 15% indicated these were helpful while 15% indicated these were somewhat helpful. Another 15% expressed the courses were not helpful. On average, 85% participants indicated that the MICAP courses have been helpful.

MITS is the next set of activities under level 2 of PEJP. MITS activities are aimed at furnishing improvements to individual cohort members’ digital news platforms. We do it by patching them up with local and international mentors who review and provide feedback to each member’s DNP in terms of their business goal, branding, niche relevance, platform suitability, content quality and consistency. They also advise them if there is a need of technical equipment or applications to improve their content, on SEO, making their content more appropriate for the platform of their choosing, digital marketing strategies, monetization and networking with other DNPs to improve their traffic, visibility, and content through cross platform collaboration. This mentoring exercise results in a final product blueprint and improvements framework. GNMI team works closely with the level 2 cohort members and provides individual technical support to implement the required improvements to their DNPs till they fit their product blueprint. MITS ultimate outcome is ready-to-launch DNP products with expected optimistic growth patterns.

Thirty mentoring sessions were conducted by experts with the inaugural cohort members to improve their DNPs to optimal standards.
A survey with was conducted to gather inaugural cohort members' feedback on whether (a) the mentoring sessions were helpful in refining their projects' framework and (b) the mentoring contributed in completion of their projects. Following are the survey results:

These results depict that overall, 90% mentees on average agree with the notion that mentoring sessions were helpful in refining their projects' framework and completion of their projects.

The Unveiling

It’s all trained and done. The time has come to show the world what our cohort members are made of and the change their DNPs will bring to country’s digital media landscape.

After all level 2 cohort DNPs receive ready-2-go (R2G) accreditation from experts, peers and GNMI management we execute a series of activities titled “The Unveiling” contributing to the launch of R2G recipients’ products creating value add in their marketing plans. The Unveiling includes digital campaigns, press and media coverage of DNPs, experts and industry leaders’ endorsements, and a capstone ceremony as their launch platform.

The inaugural cohort of 2021 had been working tirelessly on their ideas since the start of the year. Eight months later, they were ready to launch their startups in our capstone project launch ceremony, in front of leading figures of media, business, and technology.
The digital campaign was executed on social media as planned. It included video journey of each cohort member’s triumphs since their joining of PEJP and details and expected impact of their DNP products.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the ceremony was held on 26th August 2021 using MICAP’s virtual event management capabilities to keep it safe for all.

The ceremony was divided into four themes of the digital news startups of our inaugural cohort.

The themes included:

1. Gender representation and social media
2. Ethics as core consideration for localized digital news platforms
3. Climate and wildlife protection – necessity, not choice
4. The relationship between economy, and under-emphasized societal values

In every session, five participants presented their digital news startups relevant to the specific theme of the session in front of guests having expertise in it. Following are the DNPs launched during the ceremony.

Digital News Platforms

**BrandTium**

by Babar Khan Javed

[https://babar.substack.com/](https://babar.substack.com/)

BrandTium is the first of its own kind of news startup that brings exclusive news, features, analysis, and reports from the advertising and media industry of Pakistan to its subscribers.

Through its content, it is creating a deeper understanding of the advertising and media industry among its subscribers. It is also helping marketers and agency executives understand the decisions being taken by the largest media agencies of the country with a special insider focus on the Publicis Groupe.

Its target audience is people working in media and advertising industry of Pakistan.

Developed on Substack, it has a news website and an email newsletter that can be subscribed to with one click.

Its business model is based on subscription, sponsorship, and advertisements from media businesses.
The Green Take presents the most significant and cutting-edge news coverage of the environment, climate change, and wildlife from Pakistan to a community interested in saving the planet. Currently present on social media, it aims to upgrade to a website in a year. The Green Take will also serve as a platform for environment journalists to learn from to get assistance in covering issues concerning the environment and climate change by providing them essential training and editorial support. It is developing a statistical database of the environment and biodiversity in Pakistan for the journalists working in these beats. The Green Take has adopted a membership model that allows the members of its community to be a part of it to experience the news-making process and to engage with the journalists working on stories of their interests.

by Khan Shehram
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtemAHzQTWZFMZOFA4n4nfw

N4NEWS HD is an infotainment YouTube channel that covers all sorts of local news from Faisalabad to fulfill information needs of the local community living in the city. It also serves as a hub of entertainment for them with its musical shows and documentaries that the founder Naseem Shah produces on a variety of subjects. The channel also has special programs for children and women. Its business model depends on local advertisements, sponsorship and social media monetization.

by Naseem Shah
https://www.youtube.com/c/N4NEWSHD/videos

Mahfooz Bachpan caters information needs of parents in Pakistan, especially those who have children with special needs. Bushra Iqbal launched the #MahfoozBachpan campaign in 2018 to help parents in understanding the physical, psychological, mental, emotional, and educational wellbeing and safety of their children. This digital startup is an extension of her campaign under which she is building a community of well-informed parents on Facebook and YouTube with its user-friendly content available in local languages that they can understand and disseminate in their circle. The startup plans to use social media monetization to earn revenue to support its operations.

by Bushra Iqbal
https://www.facebook.com/groups/4007418912651972
Women TV GB is a YouTube channel that features original reporting and videos on a range of issues affecting women in Gilgit Baltistan. It also features in-depth interviews of notable women from the region highlighting their achievements. It also works to promote winter tourism in Gilgit Baltistan by producing multimedia content about main attractions, hotels, tourists, and their issues. It depends upon YouTube monetization for its business.

Duaa Mirza Official is a digital news startup focused on building a community that understands and works to improve how Pakistan deals with crime and victimization through ethical crime reporting. It has a YouTube account and a Facebook page. It provides the most current, complete, and specific information and advice on news coverage of victims, witnesses as well as their families and friends. Duaa Mirza, the woman behind the startup, started it to put an end to sensation in crime news reporting. Its target audience is between the age group of twenty to thirty-five. It generates its revenue through YouTube monetization program and advertisements from local businesses and sponsored content.

News Kahani is a women-led bilingual news website that delivers reliable, non-partisan, and essential news stories in politics, culture, health, sports, and entertainment to a diversified audience. It focuses on telling stories that make a difference alongside building a community through truly ground-level reporting of the issues affecting the masses. It is run by a four member team - PEJP inaugural cohort participant, Sheema Siddiqui (Urdu content editor), Asifa Idress (English content head), Asila Siddiqua (graphic designer, videographer and animator), and Umama Iftikhar (social media manager). Its content appeals to the general public who want to stay updated about recent events happening around them. Its business model finds its support into advertisement, sponsored content, and social media monetization.
by Naveed Ahmed

Twin City News is a community channel on YouTube that explores the political, social, and cultural structure of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, jointly known as the “twin cities” on account of strong social and economic links between them. Its founder Naveed Ahmed uses it to tell stories from powerful institutions housed in Islamabad to the Pothohar Plateau that surrounds Rawalpindi to shared but distinctive cultural settings of both cities to an audience that has long been waiting for a local news set up. Twin City News will earn its revenue from local advertisements, sponsorship and social media monetization.

by Raja Kamran

www.rajakamran.com

Raja Kamran Karaobar Wala is a bilingual digital news platform fulfilling the information needs of the people interested in business, economy, and trade in Pakistan. It is reaching the commoners through creative and interactive information sharing techniques about Pakistan’s most important financial centers, key markets, and leading players in a language they understand. It also serves as a one-stop resource portal for new entrepreneurs and business persons giving them simplified information about investment, savings, and business through discussions with experts and practical tutorials. It currently has a website and an embedded YouTube channel, Tajzia with Raja Kamran. The main highlight of the news startup is its multimedia “how to do” content guiding entrepreneurs in developing their businesses and understanding the banking structure in Pakistan and their legal rights. It relies on Google Adsense, direct advertising, and paid reviews for its monetization.

by Rabia Umaima Ahmed

https://www.instagram.com/wetboopsofficial/?utm_medium=copy_link

Wet Boops is an initiative of journalist Rabia Umaima Ahmed that aims to educate children about animal rights, safety and protection through videos and animation. It is building a compassionate community for animals in Pakistan providing them with animal welfare education through its content. It has a website and social media accounts mainly on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, targeting children between 10 to 18 years of age. The news startup also features veterinary doctors, animal rights activists and government officials who educate the community about animals and how they should taken care of in their video messages. Wet Boops relies on social media monetization and direct advertising from local businesses for its revenue. In the future, Ahmed wishes to coordinate with the government to make it a part of the school curriculum.
by Qadeer Khan Bajwa
www.thecrux.news

The Crux is Pakistan’s first digital news website that caters information needs of generation Z by acting as a news gatherer for them. It summarizes each news story in bite-sized 50-words and publishes it on its website with a link to original news for those who wish to read details. It was final project of Qadeer Ahmad during his MPhil at the University of the Punjab. Since his graduation, he has been working on his project to turn it into a sustainable news startup. It focuses on generation Z, individuals under the age of 24 as in 2021. Comprising of a news website and social media platforms it relies on social media monetization, Google Adsense, and direct advertising from local market for its business.

by Raza Khan Dotani
www.tribalpost.pk

The Tribal Post features political, social, and cultural news from the merged tribal districts of Pakistan and rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa amplifying unorthodox voices and fostering a culture of healthy debate to promote peace and tolerance in the society. It especially focuses on the cultural and social aspects of the merged tribal districts that have remained underreported in mainstream media for decades. It takes contributions from freelance journalists as well as citizen journalists from the tribal areas of Pakistan. After the program, the founder is adding new elements to his startup such as podcasts and videos to make it more appealing for its audience. Its business model relies on advertisements and sponsorships along with Google Adsense and social media monetization.

by Sameer Ali Khan
https://www.facebook.com/collectivepak/

Collective Pakistan is country’s first digital news startup that is connecting minorities in Sindh with the mainstream majority by telling stories of religious harmony and brotherhood and exploring their cultures. It produces multimedia community stories intending to promote communication, dialogue, and cooperation between different faiths, religions, and cultures in Pakistan using socially conscious films. It has a news website, social media platforms and an E-commerce store that it uses to promote small-scale businesses of people from minorities and underprivileged communities. It will earn its revenue from social media monetization and the E-commerce store. Its target audience is the general public especially human rights activists, and cultural activists.
Damaan TV is a digital news startup that connects the people living in the southern divisions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa particularly in Dera Ismail Khan with their cultural heritage by covering the rich cultural history of the region in multimedia format. Damaan TV digs into the rich cultural history of the region and brings forward engaging stories for its audience. Damaan TV has become the biggest news platform of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa now with a following of more than 300,000. Its business model is based on social media monetization, Google Adsense, and advertisements from local businesses and organizations.

The News Café by Safiullah Gul

The News Cafe covers news about climate change, the environment, archeology, and tourism. It encompasses a website and a YouTube channel along with Facebook & Twitter accounts. Pakistan is especially vulnerable to wild weather and other effects of climate change, however, the mainstream media rarely give coverage to any of these issues. Seeing this, journalist and a participant of PEJP Safiullah Gul launched this startup to fill the existing gap in reporting. His startup offers some of the most comprehensive coverage in said beats to fill this information gap with the contributions from journalists present across the country. It gets its revenue from advertisements, sponsored content & social media monetization.

Independent Women by Sameera Latif

Independent Women utilizes the techniques of digital storytelling to support and empower women of two districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu - by amplifying their voices and concerns. It is featuring their untold stories and creating a digital space for them where they are heard. It covers a wide range of issues such as domestic violence, sexual violence, education, and legal procedures with an aim to make these a part of regular conversation. It has a YouTube channel and a Facebook page and earns its revenue from social media monetization and direct advertisements from local businesses, individuals and organizations.
by Tanzila Raza Khan
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC71InxJWpLcw0U0MUVBTY8A

Disability News is a YouTube channel that explores lives of persons with disabilities living in Pakistan from a different lens. Typically, mainstream media covers sufferings from their lives and ignores rest of their personality. Tanzila Khan launched this channel to change this pattern of coverage. As a woman who uses a wheelchair herself, she believes mainstream media often ignores the infotainment needs of persons with disabilities. Her venture features news, documentaries, and reality shows about persons with disabilities as well as create content for them they can enjoy without feeling left out. The startup will earn its revenue from YouTube monetization program and sponsorship.

by Mansoor Hussain
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX3xtMXxUGLjMPxBLYtPEg/videos

Voice of Balochistan youth is a youth-led, non-partisan digital news startup covering a range of issues concerning the youth of Balochistan. It also covers their stories of success, showcases their talent to the world, and helps them connect with the opportunities in the region and beyond. It also shares video stories exploring Balochistan to promote tourism in the area. It is currently present on social media only. The content is shared on Facebook page and YouTube channel and pushed through WhatsApp groups. It depends on social media monetization and sponsorship for revenue generation.

by Zeenat Bibi
www.genderlense.pk

Genderlens.pk is a women-led digital news startup covering issues of particular concern to women, children, religious minorities, and transgenders in Pakistan. It uses advanced narrative techniques in digital media to tell stories of the voiceless and of those who do not get coverage on mainstream media. Genderlens.pk has a news website with its presence on major social networking websites. It is formulating a plan to open it as a platform for the women journalists of the country where they can publish their work and become voice of voiceless. Its target audience is women, minorities, transgenders and anyone who wish to read news about them. Genderlens.pk generates its revenue from social media monetization and direct advertisements from local businesses.
Find Focus Films is building a community passionate for the conservation of wildlife and the environment through impactful storytelling via film. It aims to transform conversations about wildlife from a distant problem to an everyday conversation topic. It currently has a Facebook page and a YouTube channel where it publishes podcasts, documentaries, short videos, and films about wildlife, climate change, global warming, and other environmental issues from Pakistan. It plans to upgrade to a streaming platform in five years. It targets individuals who are thirty years and older and have an interest in saving wildlife. It currently earns its revenue through social media monetization and sponsorship.

How is PEJP Changing Media Landscape in Pakistan

Since past half-decade or so it has become abundantly evident that traditional news media in Pakistan will not be able to compete with the global technological advances while combating the economic crisis and struggling for autonomy. This has left the industry decimated, leaving thousands of journalists laid off or with substantially lower pay. The journalist’s community is also evolving with the realization that they not only can — but want — to operate independently for staying true to their moral code for responsible and ethical journalism. The writing on the wall was clear even before the Covid-19 pandemic. Larger journalist community which was indisposed of the new media has been making efforts to crack the digital media equation that ranks of young YouTubers and bloggers have mastered. Unfortunately, years in the field did little for learning the tools of digital trade, branding and marketing, and monetization. The “passion economy” felt more of a farfetched idea with no pathway to its materialization. In year 2020, we took a step to initiate the entrepreneurial journalism training in Pakistan to facilitate the journalist community in transition to digital media, keeping it small, digital, cost-efficient and independently owned. We believed that with support, entrepreneurial journalists could provide valuable, responsible news and contribute to the media landscape of the country. Today, we know that it wasn’t a step at all. It was a leap. Here are 5 things we have learned about PEJP since its launch. It is changing opinions and mindsets among the journalist community. The mainstream media often ignored local news, mostly relying on big events. The digital news platforms could change this pattern by covering stories from remote areas, especially focusing on ethical and moral issues - Mazhar Abbas, Geo News.
The mainstream media lacks diversity and creativity in its news coverage. In contrast, digital news platforms allow journalists to cover a diverse range of issues from their perspective. Digital platforms also provide freedom and space to women journalists that they do not find in mainstream media - Amber Rahim Shamsi, Broadcast Journalist

I am very happy to see the emergence of independent media platforms in Pakistan. I am confident that these platforms would be a mirror of journalism in the future. - Kamal Siddiqui, CEJ

These startups could introduce solution journalism in Pakistan as they were not only highlighting the issue but were also suggesting the solution to solve it – Aoun Sahi, PTV

Our society needed better media that focus on issues of common men rather than only politics – Haroon Rashid, Independent Urdu

“When a thing is exposed for too long, it gets rusty. This was the state of journalists like me, who have been in the industry for decades. We needed to refresh our brains and remove the rust; this training is doing just that for us. My entire mindset has been changed”: Raja Kamran, Karachi Cohort.

“We are witnessing a transition from traditional to digital media and journalists must learn how to survive in this era. I must let go of my pen and learn new trends of reporting and journalism. How should I make the world see the work that I have put so much hard work in? I have now learnt to connect my content with its right and intended audience”: Manzoor Ahmed, Karachi Cohort

“I was producing digital content; I write and narrate short stories on my page and manage multiple pages like this, but all my work was happening haphazardly. The world of social media is altogether a different universe, and these days made me know about terms and information that I had never heard before. I was constantly told by my friends to open a YouTube channel, and I was so hesitant. Yesterday, I opened my account and uploaded my first vlog”: Bushra Iqbal Hussain, Islamabad Cohort

“I lost my job in covid-19 and then I knew I have to branch out towards digitization. This training took away my skepticism and anxiety surrounding blogging, and vlogging. Turns out, it’s not that hard at all. The only thing is you need to give yourself a push to start”: Safiullah Gul, Islamabad Cohort.
Women-led initiatives made breakthroughs

The PEJP was committed to providing women reporters and content creators equal learning opportunities, and we are pleased to report that these women were able to create innovative digital content, some of which touches issues severely under-reported in Pakistan.

1 - Tanzila Khan, a disability rights activist and content creator, reported on accessibility at Pakistan’s largest amusement park. Subsequently, the park authorities have decided to audit the whole park and make it disability-friendly. This success story indicates that the program participant has acquired the ability to produce unbiased, nuanced reporting for their target audience and the confidence to use her online brand to contribute to the freedom and diversity of media landscape using solutions journalism.

2 - A crime reporter from Lahore, Duaa Mirza, covered story of a gender-based violence survivor, and concerned authorities stepped forward taking notice of the case. This success story indicates that the program participant acquired the ability to produce unbiased, nuanced reporting for their target audience.

Some of the participants were able to provide local journalists of their area and fresh media students with platforms where they could publish their videos, blogs and articles.

1 - Raza Khan Dotani, who is the founder of Tribal Post, has created a platform where bloggers, local journalists and students from South Waziristan can publish their work. A story by a journalist published in Tribal Post received a lot of attention and concerned authorities took action over it.

2 - Similarly, Zeenat Bibi provides women journalists reporting in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region with a platform, her website Genderlens.pk, to publish their stories.

3 - Sheema Siddiqui has also created a similar platform, News Kahani, which is entirely women-led and covers human interest stories. Her team is run by women, and women journalists contribute to the stories as well.

Bringing critical and under-reported incidents to light

Some of the digital platforms created and developed with support from GNMI focus on areas that are pressing, and that which are largely ignored by mainstream media. We are happy to report that 5 out (Find Focus Films by Syed Hasnain Raza, The Green Take by Khan Shehram Eusafzye, Damaan TV by Nusrat Abbas, Wet Boops by R. Umaina Ahmed and The News Café by Safiullah Gul) of the 20 news platforms focus on wildlife, environment, heritage and climate change.

Damaan TV’s reporting on preservation of historic buildings in Dera Ismail Khan was highly impactful and led to strict action by authorities.
Collaboration and mutual support are core values of PEJP. We have promoted it since the very beginning, at the bootcamps, by setting up Communities of Practice (CoP) of regional and inaugural cohorts on WhatsApp and Facebook groups. The objective of CoP is to nurture cooperation, peer support and sharing of information and skills for enhancing entrepreneurial journalism practices and culture. The CoP have been vibrant since its inception as participants have been actively sharing their experiences, feedback and even content they have been developing during the training.

Levels of engagement:

**Karachi Cohort:**
20 members sent 951 messages, 173 media, links and documents with overall 72% participation (18 participants posted at least once).

**Lahore Cohort:**
22 participants sent 976 messages, 245 media, links and documents with 77% participation (17 participants posted at least once).

**Islamabad Cohort:**
23 participants sent 474 messages, 336 media, links and documents with 100% participation (23 participants posted at least once).

**Small Grants Cohort:**
20 members sent 1,079 messages, 171 media, links and documents with a 100% participation.

**All Cohorts:**
54 (among 65) active members between January 31 to September 5, 2021 (83% participation)

When the participants of PEJP Phase 2 connected with each other during the virtual training, many realized the potential for cross-platform collaborations, which led to some of them creating digital content with each other, opening up new avenues for discussions and leading to interesting conversations. Bushra Iqbal, a journalist and child rights activist, collaborated with Sheema Siddiqui, who writes on human interest stories, to talk about how disability in children affects families and society’s role in providing children with an enabling environment. Bushra also collaborated with Syed Hasnain Raza, a filmmaker and wildlife reporter, for a radio show on wetlands and climate change.
**Trainers & Mentors**

**Detailed Profiles of Trainers**

Here are given detailed profiles of all trainers and mentors involved in PEJP.

**Level 1 Cohorts**

**Badar Khushnood** is Co-founder and Vice President of Growth at Bram-erz.com, a leading full-service digital media & marketing agency in Pakistan. He primarily focuses on Growth Hacking two of Bramerz product ventures, Fish-ry.com (e-commerce + performance marketing) & Publish-rr.com content publishing + monetization. He has also worked as Country Representative for Twitter and Google. He tweets @badar76

**Zena Barakat** is a professional storyteller and filmmaker at IDEO. She has worked for twelve years in journalism before joining IDEO. During her career, she produced videos for The New York Times, ABC News, National Public Radio, Bloomberg News, National Geographic and the Independent Film Chan- nel. She is former John S. Knight fellow at Stanford.

**Ayaz Imtiaz Ahmed Khan** is the founder of Mojo Pakistan that provides training on mobile journalism to individuals. Khan is also a multimedia trainer, researcher, technology specialist at a private news channel, Express News, and a visiting lecturer at Centre for Excellence in Journalism at Institute of Business Administration in Karachi. He has led the development of the Mobile Journalism production model in Pakistan. He tweets @ayazz_khann

**Aoun Abbas Sahi** is an Islamabad-based award-winning journalist, researcher, media trainer, and development communication specialist. He is associated with The Los Angeles Times, as a special correspondent. In 2016, he shared the Pulit-zer Prize awarded to LA Times staff for cover mass shooting in San Bernardino, California. His work has been published in Daily Mail, The Times, Star Tribune, and several other global level publications. He tweets @AounSahi

**Marjan Arbab** is an academic turned entrepreneur working in the domain of blog for digital media, blog monetization, email marketing, affiliate marketing, and online course creation strategies. She also offers her services as a consultant for various businesses and has helped them in the development of business strat- egies, business models, and project management. She is currently working with National Incubation Center (NIC)Karachi. She tweets @marjanarbab

**Ahmer Naqvi** is a freelance writer and creative consultant from Karachi, Paki- stan. He has worked as Chief Operating Officer of music startup Patari; digital head for the cricket tournaments PSL season 1 and 5; creative head at web video platform Teeli; and a columnist for cricket website ESPNCricinfo. Ahmer worked in Pakistani films and television as a scriptwriter, including Laal Kabootar and Burka Avenger. He is on social media as @karachikhatmal.

**Najia Ashar** is a broadcast journalist and development professional with more than 17 years of experience in Pakistan. She has been a media consultant and trainer at CEJ-IBA. Have worked on safety and security of journalists at Stan- ford and introduced design thinking for journalists for the first time in Pakistan. She is the founder of Media Baithak and did a news morning show on GNN TV.
Talha Ahad is the founder and CEO of The Centrum Media which is Pakistan’s first digital news network specializing in visual storytelling. He is a multi-media journalist, storyteller, and documentary filmmaker with years of experience in documenting conflict, crisis, and key social issues. He highlights social issues through high-interest perspectives and innovative formats. His work has been published in Vice News, Guardian, and Sky News. He tweets @Talhaahad

Ali Raza has been listed in the Top ten bloggers of Pakistan. He is a Google certified trainer and an owner of Google Partner Firm. He is also a Vlogger and has attained quite a great following in such short span of time. He has also been giving lectures as Guest Speaker in different universities in Pakistan.

Haroon Rashid is the Managing Editor at Independent Urdu. He is a seasoned journalist with three decades of experience in print and digital media. Before joining Independent Urdu, Haroon Rashid was working with BBC Urdu service as its editor in Pakistan. He is known for his coverage of militancy in the tribal regions of Pakistan. BBC world service honoured him with the award of the best reporter in 2007.

Beatrice Motamedi is executive director of Global Student Square that offers a digital platform for journalism aspiring journalists around the world to connect and work together. She has also created newspaper, magazine and digital media programs at Urban and at Oakland. Beatrice was a 2015 John S. Knight fellow at Stanford University.

Level 2 Cohort

Jeremy Caplan is the Director of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at the Craig Newark Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York (CUNY). He is an experienced educator and journalist, having served as the director of education for the school’s of Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism. Caplan was Wiegers Fellow at Columbia Journalism School, where he earned an M.S. in Journalism. He has written on business, culture, and technology of Time Magazine.

Nuno Vargas is a digital product and strategy consultant who has co-built and led digital projects all over the world with clients. These include Facebook, Bill Melinda Gates Foundation, Google News Lab, the ICFJ, IOM-United Nations, Gillette Grupo Clarin, Deutsche Well, MDIF, Fraunhofer Institute, or the WHO-United Nations. He was the first Portuguese to be chosen as John S. Knight Fellow at Stanford University where he was also a guest lecturer at the Graduate School of Education and a coach at the school - Stanford Institute of Design. Nuno is currently a John S. Knight – European Ambassador Nuno founder News Story an open-source data gathering tool for media and scholars (now deactivated), selected as one of the top 10 News startups at EBU/CNN NewsX – change in 2013 and was CPO and co-founder of playnews.io. a news games startup, based in Argentina.
**Farieha Aziz** is Karachi based APNS award winning journalist. She is a co-founder and director of Bolo Bhi. She has a masters in English Literature. She has worked with Newsline from July 2007 – January 2012. She served as an amicus curia in a case filed in Lahore High Court in 2013, which challenged the ban of YouTube, and is currently a petitioner of behalf of Bolo Bhi in a case filed in the Islamabad High Court. The case is challenging censorship on the internet, and the powers of the regulators. When she is not ranging over Internet censorship or poor-internet connectivity, she chooses to turn to cricket, Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, and qawwalis for her sanity.

**Adeel Durvesh** is the principal & founder of PACE College Karachi, which is the 1st Entrepreneurship college of Pakistan. He is a seasoned corporate trainer with special focus on finance and accounting. Mr. Durvesh is also an entrepreneurship mentor for British Council and National Incubation Center (Karachi). He has been an RJ on FM 88.

**Badar Khushnood** is Cofounder and Vice President of Growth at Bramerz.com, a leading full-service digital media & marketing agency in Pakistan. He primarily focuses on Growth Hacking two of Bramerz product ventures, Fishry.com (e-commerce + performance marketing) and Publishrr.com (content publishing + monetization). He has also worked as Country Representative for Twitter and Google.

**Usama Khilji** is the co-founder at Bolo Bhi, an advocacy and policy initiative, and works on issues related to digital safety and security. He has been contributing columns to different publications on policies in Pakistan and is also involved in training journalists.

**Hira Saeed** is the founder and CEO of Caterphillars, a social enterprise that works on startups which are women-led. She is also a consultant for copy writing and personal branding. Moreover, she provides services to digital media organizations on social media strategy, copywriting, email marketing through coaching and consulting.

**Haris Nadeem** is Community Manager at Google and Chief Editor at TeamAndroid.com. He is an entrepreneur, growth specialist, Google and web developer, a blogger as well as a motivational speaker. He has extensive experience of working in the tech sector, especially mobile technologies.
Speakers underscore need for highlighting environmental issues

Independent, responsible digital news platforms are the future of journalism

Experts in social media, digital content creation and mobile journalism led a training on entrepreneurship and
Independent and responsible digital news platforms are the future of journalism in Pakistan, senior journalists said in the virtual Capstone Project Launch Ceremony organized by Global Neighbourhood for Media innovation (GNMI) under its Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program on Thursday, August 26, 2021.
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