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Message from the President

In the year 2021, the world was fighting on three fronts...the actual pandemic, the disinfodemic, and shrinking press freedom. The fate of Pakistan’s journalist community has been no different than those states that are ruled by men and women who firmly believe in silencing the media. This has translated into a crushing economic crisis for the journalist community of Pakistan and its news media industry at large. Thousands went jobless, and hundreds of thousands of women, children, and elderly dependents suddenly found themselves without a proper livelihood and in compromised quality of life. In search of a solution, many switched professions, while others weren’t afforded the same privilege. Many faced grave mental health issues.

Entrepreneurial practices have been empowering diverse groups across the world for centuries. Now journalism and entrepreneurship are merging into a new field altogether. This shift in journalism practices is evident globally through the increased utilization of digital technologies and social media platforms by freelance journalists. These rebels revolutionized the news media landscape by telling stories of local interests with a global perspective without affiliating themselves with any news organization while keeping their news authentic, responsible, and relevant.

Learning from this changing landscape and identifying it as the solution to the economic problems of Pakistan’s journalist community, we at Global Neighbourhood for Media Innovation (GNMI) introduced the first-of-its-kind Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program (PEJP) in the year 2021. Journalists across Pakistan benefited from the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and avenues of work on digital platforms that could increase their autonomy and financial independence with their own independent digital news outlets. Our inaugural cohort was only a gateway to this journey. We aimed to build on its results and further expand the program for greater impact and sustainability. Later in 2021, we rolled out another cohort of women and introduced the cascading model to our approach, creating a ripple effect in programmatic impact.

Digital platforms supporting unbiased and nuanced news reporting also contribute to curbing disinformation. This led us to create Disinfo-genics, our response to fake news. By advancing the capacity of journalists to identify and mitigate disinformation using tools and their content, we not only completed its first run with over 70 fake news busts across Pakistan but also upscaled it for another two years.

GNMI is entering its 5th year of existence. We are now witnessing expansion and variety in our interventions, leading to a plethora of peacebuilding, tolerance and rule of law focused actions with much larger, diverse portfolio with much greater outreach and higher beneficiary numbers.

Where will this sense of new directions lead us? Only 2022 can answer this. For now, dear reader, we will anchor you to our progress in 2021.

Carpe Posterum!
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## Conclusion

## Our Partners In Change And Innovation
In 2021, we worked on a number of exciting projects focusing on promotion of media innovation in Pakistan, strengthening the capacities of media, peace, and criminal justice practitioners. We built a narrative that echoes innovation, sustainability, and peace by supporting individuals working to promote tolerance, gender equality, human rights and democratic values in the society.

Here is a brief mention of the projects that we implemented this year.

**Projects**

The Gender Equality Reporting project focuses on expanding access to information on women’s issues and increasing the capacity of journalists and media students to aid them in developing media content with improved and more relevant context. It did so by increasing their existing capacity in gender-sensitive journalism reporting, directly enabling them to report gender issues responsibly using the contemporary tools of digital and social media.

**Reshaping The Future Of Journalism: Innovative Gender Equality Reporting through Diverse Media Tools**

The Gender Equality Reporting project focuses on expanding access to information on women’s issues and increasing the capacity of journalists and media students to aid them in developing media content with improved and more relevant context. It did so by increasing their existing capacity in gender-sensitive journalism reporting, directly enabling them to report gender issues responsibly using the contemporary tools of digital and social media.
This project started in September 2019 and concluded in March 2021. We organized a total of twenty-two training sessions throughout this period with 786 media students and 108 journalists in Sindh and Balochistan. We also organized six workshops with 108 journalists on media and gender to familiarize participants with gender-sensitive reporting contributing to reduce the gender gap within media.

To enhance the social impact of these learnings and provide participants with the opportunity to apply their training in their work, we encouraged the participants to produce news products (articles/news/broadcast packages/blogs) reflecting gender-sensitive language and principles. In total, the journalists produced 55 news articles for their respective media outlets and students made 19 stories focused on a range of issues affecting women with gender sensitized approach.

A training manual titled Best Practices in Journalism for Reporting on Gender Issues was also published under this project in March 2021 (available on our website) to help journalists understand the attitudes, prejudices, biases, and socialization that enable them to recognize and analyze the imbalance of women’s voices, as compared to men’s voices, in the media. It gives them a basic understanding of gender sensitive reporting and how each one of them can adopt small changes in their work to ensure that the words, context and the approach they use to create their news stories are gender-sensitive.

Last but not the least, we also organized the very first journalism festival to celebrate the efforts of the participants of the program. Ten journalism students showcased their projects in front of media experts, trainers, academics, and representatives from the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi. The students were awarded Mobile Journalism Kits comprising necessary items for producing multimedia stories.
Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program (PEJP) is designed to increase Pakistani journalists’ capacity to create and distribute content online from which they can furnish or significantly supplement their income, thereby reducing dependency on government-sponsored advertising.

The achievement of its goal depended upon supporting journalists with essential training and resources to launch their own independent digital news platforms. This support included 3-day foundational training to the three inaugural cohorts of the program in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. The training focused on the basics of entrepreneurial journalism, establishing news startups and marketing strategy and monetization techniques. All participants had broadcast-quality portfolios of their digital news startups ready at the end of the initial training that focused on.

The program faced obstacles when the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic hit, but work did not stop. The remaining phases were implemented using virtual means and tools. All participants applied for an advanced training and financial grant in the second phase of the program. GNMI, after rigorous screening, selected the best twenty portfolios, which were then provided with advanced and technical training, as well as one-to-one training sessions via its Media Incubation Center and Accelerator Platform (MICAP). It had 7 courses ranging from online content creation to e-commerce to copyrights and digital security. MICAP made it easier for the participants to attend the training and complete assigned tasks at their ease during the pandemic.

The fourth quarter of the project kicked-off with 30 virtual one-on-one mentoring sessions to provide guidance and assistance specific to each of 20 small grants finalists’ digital news platforms (DNPs) incepted under the program. At its closure, 20 promotional videos were developed to increase awareness about the PEJP initiative and promote the work of PEJP inaugural cohort through their DNPs.

Virtual Capstone Project Launch Ceremonies were held, also on MICAP, where the finalists of the program showcased their projects in front of senior journalists, top entrepreneurs, and technologists of the country.
GNMI implemented the Women in Media Mentorship Program with a goal to enhance and support women’s leadership development in Pakistan’s media industry. It aimed to support women in journalism in creating media new initiatives and innovation, and to support women as activists, unionists and decision makers in journalist representative bodies.

This program was launched in continuation of our support to promote entrepreneurial journalism in Pakistan. It was a more elaborate intervention than its predecessor PEJP, given its women-focused, women-led approach.

The program provided training in digital innovation skills to three shortlisted participants. One-on-one mentoring sessions were also held by leading subject-matter experts in the media and communication field. The participants were also provided technical support to organize ‘give-back online learning workshops’ to female peers and media students in their respective geographical areas to create a ripple effect, thereby increasing the impact of the knowledge and skills disseminated during this project.

After the mentees’ social media platforms were successfully established, a podcast was held where they talked about their individual projects and the experience of the mentorship with our digital audience.
This project intends to create awareness around gendered disinformation and its impact on women in Pakistan through digital media literacy. The advocacy and training program brings together women from various professional fields to learn and share ideas about how to identify and fight fake news, disinformation, and misinformation as well as discuss how these issues particularly affect marginalized communities and genders.

The program’s ultimate goal is to counter the increasing online violence and discord in the society, perpetrated through fake news and hashtags. Through this project, GNMI has organized an intensive three-fold media literacy program in Pakistan for women media practitioners, journalists, filmmakers, trainers, media regulatory bodies/authorities, press councils, and civil society organizations, particularly women’s organizations.

We employed online technologies and newly introduced tools to reach a maximum number of beneficiaries for this program. We organized training workshops on disinformation and fact-checking from female journalists working in all types of media outlets in Pakistan. We also hosted webinars from our official social media platforms to stir a debate on cyber safety and ways to make the digital space safer for women.

We started our own podcast under this program in July 2021. We released a series of four podcasts on our official social media platforms discussing the need of safe cyber spaces for women in Pakistan and media literacy for women who use internet for their information needs. The aim of this podcast series was to provide listeners with an insight into challenges faced by certain communities in connecting digitally, its repercussions, and growing misogynistic toxicity on social media.

We also utilized this program to make our debut on Twitter Spaces, then a new feature of Twitter that allows its users to engage in audio conversations on topics of their interests in real time. Twitter Spaces allowed us to engage more people in the conversation that helped us understand the needs of a bigger audience in a better way.

A total of 53 people took part in training programs conducted under MILForWomen. These included journalists who were reporting on gender and human rights, while some were dedicated fact-checking experts. We also engaged social scientists, researchers, academicians, digital rights experts, human and gender rights experts, and healthcare professionals to gain a deeper understanding of digital audiences’ behavior.

The social media posts created to share the work produced under this program reached more than ten thousand unique social media users on our official social media platforms.
Talib-e-Aman aims to propagate peace narratives amongst the student body in the universities in Pakistan. The program provisions an innovative solution to address the lack of positive socio-cultural and non-academic intellectually stimulating activities for university students on campuses, and in everyday life.

The primary goal of this program is to enrich student life and create a vibrant and pluralistic student culture on university campuses. It offers constructive opportunities and platforms that bring together students for socio-cultural activities using media and technology which is pivotal in building positive alternative mindsets among our youth.

In collaboration with Karachi University and Usman Institute for Technology University, GNMI established media clubs for their respective students which they could use as platforms to engage in activities focused on promotion of counter violence extremism using media.

A total of 121 students from both universities were provided training in digital storytelling and writing, news production and dissemination with the objective of promoting peace in the society.

These associations were two more feathers in GNMI’s wings of academic partnerships which include Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University Lyari, IBA Sukkur, Shah Abdul Latif University, University of Balochistan, and Ziauddin University.

Media Baithak - Amplifying the Role of Women in the Media for CVE

In 2019, GNMI launched Media Baithak as a community to promote intellectual, cultural and professional engagement between media and civil society. At Media Baithak, we facilitate and digitally broadcast dialogue between stakeholders from the media and civil society around subjects of the democratic processes, social justice and accountability, amongst other interactive activities and trainings. The initiative’s goal is to create a safe space for various stakeholders and community leaders to discuss and seek solutions for issues facing Pakistan.

Carrying forward that imperative mission, in 2021, we engaged 50 female media representatives from across Karachi to increase their ability to report on CVE-related content. Through training sessions, media content producers were sensitized to make their content more inclusive, tolerant, informed, and credible. We also showcased and elevated inspirational female CVE role models through short videos and disseminated on social media and in targeted communities through community screenings.

Check out our International Women’s Day Campaign 2021 on social media to watch these stories.
GNMI launched Disinfogenic as an online media capacity-building project to increase journalists’ skills to counter disinformation in Pakistan. It fosters knowledge, skills, and tools for developing innovating response systems, strategies, and solutions to curb disinformation in all its forms. It does so by promoting in-depth understanding of disinformation, its roots, causes, its forms and transmutations, its delivery mechanisms, its evolution, factors involved in its cultivation and its impact on humanity. We launched this program in a time when journalists all around the world were fighting with the infodemic that came with the global pandemic of coronavirus. After seeing the needs of Pakistani journalists, we designed extensive training sessions on fact-checking, live webinars with senior journalists and fact-checkers discussing the challenges journalists face in the newsroom when they deal with viral but unverified and digital stories of journalists, and media scholars amplifying the need of advanced tools to deal with disinformation.

So far, this project has benefitted 411 journalists (142 women, 270 men) all across the country. A total of 72 journalists took part in our training workshops that were held under this program. Post-workshop they utilized their acquired knowledge and skills to produce news stories/blogs/vlogs/social media posts on a range of socio-political issues for their individual media platforms.

In the end of 2021, we launched a continuation of this program with 73 professional multimedia journalists and digital content producers out of which 38 were women from across Pakistan. These participants will attend our specialized training program for disinformation and combating fake news next year and utilize the learning from those sessions in producing investigative news stories digging up truth and debunking fake news for their individual media platforms.

Adal is a three-fold innovative and sustainable program to advance the capacity of Pakistan’s criminal justice sector. It aims to strengthen the resilience of criminal justice sector institutions, advancement of women, and public confidence in the rule of law through virtual training during the protracted pandemic and preparing for future crises more broadly.

It addresses the challenges in Pakistan’s criminal justice system, including women representation and participation. Its strategy includes an innovative virtual training resource center for remote, responsive, and high-quality instructional support amid coronavirus pandemic; skills-based online training asynchronous/synchronous courses on priority subject areas; and women’s leadership training program to support and empower women in law enforcement and justice institutions.
PeaceFLIX - Recognizing Effective Peacebuilding in Pakistan

PeaceFLIX - aka Urdu Farogh-e-Aman aur Khawateen - is a community peacebuilding and peace-promotion project which aims to develop, support, and uplift influential women and men across Pakistan as recognized peacebuilders within their communities. It aims to increase social cohesion, decrease attraction of extremist narratives, and promote the greater acceptance of the role of women in building and sustaining peace.

Not only is the program designed to recognize women’s efforts in peacebuilding activities across Pakistan, but it is especially meant to highlight those whose stories remain untold. The project’s approach leverages community networks and social media to safely raise the capacity levels and profiles of those women and men who are critical to building social cohesion and reducing the impact of the extremist narrative at a community level. The program output will contribute research and analysis to the global conversation around women’s role in effective community peacebuilding.

In 2021, we were busy lifting this project off the ground, which consisted of project start-up activities, preparing and executing pre-training survey tools, and identifying project participants, who added up to 96 peacebuilders from across Pakistan including Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Islamabad, Gilgit, Muzaffarabad, and many more.

To outline the behaviors, attributes, and engagement levels of identified community peacebuilders, we developed a nationwide Baseline Study using three different data collection strategies including Question-Based Surveys, Focus Group Discussion, and Key Informant Interviews. This information was utilized to directly inform the training curriculum designed for the program.
Research & Publications

The research and publication desk of GNMI is an active and integral part of our action strategy. This year, the desk produced a series of manuals and IEC material which contributed to multiple interventions taken up in 2021. These publications are available for open access on our website and also in print.

Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program – A Practitioner’s Guide

GNMI published this comprehensive guide under its Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program in January 2021 for journalists, independent bloggers/vloggers, and content creators looking to understand the basics of entrepreneurial journalism and the possible avenues they can explore by practicing it on digital platforms in Pakistan. It uses the basis of ethical and responsible journalism practices to outline the possible ways journalists can explore to build their innovative and sustainable digital news startups from scratch.

Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program – Transforming Ideas into Digital News Platforms

GNMI published this comprehensive guide under its Pakistan Entrepreneurial Journalism Program (PEJP) in November 2021. The aim of this publication is to promote entrepreneurial journalism and compile the successful implementation of PEJP 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. This document not only explains the methodology of implementing the program but takes the reader on our journey since its inception to conclusion of its inaugural cohort.
Best Practices In Journalism For Reporting On Gender Issues – A Training Manual For Journalists

GNMI published this training manual in March 2021 for journalists, media trainers, and organizations working for media development in Pakistan and abroad to support them in their efforts to make their news coverage more gender-sensitive and responsible to create more inclusive societies. It carries tips and techniques on the gender-sensitive portrayal of women in news coverage, use of gender-sensitive language for news writing along a guide on developing niche-oriented digital news startups. It was developed at a time when the world was still fighting against the novel coronavirus. Hence, the activities and exercises mentioned in this publication have two versions: offline and online, making it practically workable for any setting.

ADAL - Virtual Training for Criminal Justice Sector of Pakistan

GNMI published this training manual under its Adal program in December 2021 for criminal justice practitioners in Pakistan to strengthen the resilience of its institutions, advancement of women, and public confidence in the rule of law through virtual training during the protracted pandemic and preparing for future crises more broadly. Access to Adal and its courses is limited to Pakistan’s criminal justice practitioners and are designed and developed in collaboration with the Faculty of Law at Ziauddin University. It was customized keeping in view the specific needs and modern demands of their work. Criminal justice practitioners can gain access to the training facilities by seeking registration on Adal Learning Management System, detailed on the next page.

Talib-e-Aman: Propagating Peace Narratives in Universities

GNMI revamped this curriculum for the Talib-e-Aman program in October 2021 to offer constructive opportunities and platforms that bring students together for socio-cultural activities using media and technology to spark positive alternative mindsets among the youth. The curriculum offers insights into Digital Storytelling & Writing Skills, Basic Digital Production & Editing, and News Dissemination Practices on Social Media Platforms.
Innovations

Supporting innovations in media technology, we designed a virtual incubator and a learning platform for media and criminal justice practitioners to facilitate their learning during the pandemic.

Media Incubation Center and Accelerator Platforms

GNMI launched the Media Incubation Center and Accelerator Platform (MICAP), a first-of-its-kind platform that serves as an interactive resource portal for journalists, content creators and students to learn new developments in journalism and communication from world class subject-matter experts from the comfort of their home at their convenience. It was launched to conduct technical trainings of journalists and provide them access to tools and resources helpful in producing nuanced and responsible news reporting in a safe manner amid the global coronavirus pandemic.

Adal Learning Management System

Adal is a virtual training hub for criminal justice officials in Pakistan. Its purpose is to enhance public confidence, access to justice, and handling of crimes by instilling self-efficacy, leadership, and resiliency skills. Adal’s courses are designed for justice sector professionals including judges, prosecutors, and police officers. To complement the Adal program, the LMS was designed as an innovative, sustainable, and impactful solution to strengthen the capacity-building capabilities of Pakistan’s criminal justice system institutions during and beyond the pandemic.

- User Management at Institutional & Individual Levels
- Performance Dashboards of Institutions & Individuals
- Modern & Innovative Courses Through Video Conferencing
- Bilingual - Urdu/English
- Two-Factor Authentication
- Quick and Easy Navigation
- Training Calendar
- Message Board and Online Chat Support
- Access to Reference Material
- Online Quizzes & Assessment
- Results & e-Certificates
A Walkthrough of Year 2021

A timeline of training programs, workshops, and other events conducted this year.

**January**

Disinfogenics: Training on Verification Platforms Digital Tools for Tackling Viral Disinformation

Talib-e-Aman: Shah A Latif University & Ben Bhutto Shaheed University

**February**

Entrepreneurial Journalism: Foundation Trainings in Karachi, Lahore & Islamabad

Media Baithak II: Unleashing the Untold Perspectives
Virtual Journalism Festival

#MILforWomen: Debunking Online Disinformation Workshop

Talib-e-Aman: Shah Abdul Latif University & Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University

Entrepreneurial Journalism: Launched Media Incubation Center & Acceleration Platform (MICAP)

Entrepreneurial Journalism: Advanced Technical Training on MICAP
#InternationalDayoftheGirl: Why Women Need Media Literacy Workshop

Women in Media Mentorship Program: Creating Spaces in Media

Media Baithak III: Promoting Leadership & Resilience of Women Workshop

Memorandum of Understanding Signed with University of Karachi & Usman Institute of Technology University

#16DaysOfActivism Campaign: Ending GBV Against Girls and Women

Adal Virtual Learning Management System Launched

PeaceFLIX: Nationwide Baseline Study
Campaigns

Like previous years, we used our social media presence to run a few campaigns supporting different causes in 2021. Here is a glimpse of what we did this year with our #Hashtag power.

International Women’s Day 2021

Every year, on International Women’s Day, we commemorate the economic, social, cultural, and political achievements of women in Pakistan. More importantly, it’s a day we can choose to challenge and call out gender bias and make a call to action to accelerate women’s equality.

For IWD 2021, GNMI hosted a webinar with senior women journalists from Pakistan to find out what they #ChooseToChallenge through their work in the media industry. The Founder and President of GNMI Najia Ashar led the webinar with Amber Rahim Shamsi, Gharida Farooqi, Ayesha Bakhsh, Asma Shirazi and Nadia Naqi in lens.

The webinar garnered over 2,000 impressions on Twitter and Facebook and was effective in sparking a conversation on why #ChooseToChallenge is important.

16 Days Of Activism

Orange The World: End Violence Against Women Now

GNMI collaborated with UN Women Pakistan for the global 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence to disseminate the thoughts of sixteen women journalists demanding an end to gender-based violence in media and an immediate reformation of media structure to make it more inclusive and equal. These are Pakistani journalists working in national and international media organizations under different roles. UN Women Pakistan and GNMI published posters during 16 Days of Activism on their official social media platforms.

The campaign was succeeded by a panel discussion of leading female journalists including Najia Ashar, Aleena Farooq Shaikh, Afia Salam, Nadia Naqi, Nasira Zuberi, Nusrat Harris and Uzma Al-Karim, who highlighted the perils and aspirations of women journalists.
GNMI on Social Media

GNMI has its presence on all major social networking platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. Here is our number game for 2021.
TWITTER ANALYTICS
Conclusion

With the world transforming and new challenges surfacing, GNMI responds by sparking innovation. And this is what 2021 was all about.

From the start, digital innovation sat atop our priority list.

The physical world was still shuttered down - but that wasn’t going to stop us from moving forward. We had to find a way out, a solution to continue the highly technical and complex training and mentoring programs to support journalists, media producers and content creators facing economic deprivation, as well as criminal justice practitioners in loss of training opportunities. The “light at the end of the tunnel”, as they say, came in the form of the Media Incubation Center & Accelerator Platform (MICAP) and Adal - two innovative virtual training hubs that offer learning & technical support services to a) uplift the digital news startups in Pakistan, and b) ensure continued training of criminal justice practitioners amidst the protracted pandemic.

The training, techniques, and tools needed to build journalists’ capacities in Entrepreneurial Journalism were yet to be introduced to Pakistan. Yet, it was our media experts and technologists who rose up to the challenge. They did so while keeping international experts’ advice and best practices in sight. The success of this program is owed to their expertise in the field, and their understanding of ground realities, the nature of digital space, and foresight on how digital audiences would engage with this evolving face of media.

Women remained at the epicenter of our initiatives as they’re usually dealt the short end of the stick. In the media sector, they were the first to be unemployed. In criminal justice institutions, they had lesser opportunities for inclusion and growth. Their role in peacebuilding and peace promotion was going unrecognized and unacknowledged in peace promotion. Their participation in the fight for veracity was disregarded. On top of all that, they remained victims of violence and abuse. As a counterbalance, we put our weight behind these women to equip and empower them to forage and build opportunities independently through mentoring support. Programs like Women in Media Mentorship, Media & Promoting the Leadership & Resilience of Women in Media, Media Information Literacy for Women (MILforWomen), and Gender Equality Reporting emerged from this effort.

Simultaneously, the media’s credibility, objectivity, and honesty were put on the line. With disinformation and fake news constantly fueling intolerance, we had to step in. Our intervention came in the form of the Disinfogenics program, which enables media professionals to develop response systems, strategies, and solutions to curb disinformation and its forms. We also brought the youth into focus through our Talib-e-Aman program since the best way to inspire change is to be proactive. The program propagates peace narratives amongst the student body in Pakistani universities by fostering pluralistic student culture. This year especially brought some brilliant minds to the forefront who we’re excited to see in mainstream and digital media in the upcoming days.

At the close of the year, when professional affairs had shifted somewhat towards normalcy, we introduced two programs that will be making a whole lot of noise in 2022 – Adal, an innovative and sustainable program that aims to advance the capacity of Pakistan’s criminal justice system, and PeaceFLIX, a community peacebuilding and peace-promotion project which aims to develop, support, and uplift influential women and men across Pakistan as recognized peacebuilders within their communities.

We prefer to let our work do the talking, which it will be doing in our next report. To quench curiosity, however, our social media handles are always available.

Standing on the edge of 2021, we’re envisioning more enlightened, empowered, and ethical communities for 2022 and beyond.

Our efforts are part of a process that we’re carrying forward into the next year and well into the future.