

Annual Report

PREPARED BY

EMPOWER WOMEN MEDIA



Places of Impact



Iran
Pakistan
Afghanistan
Lebanon
Tunisia
Egypt
Saudi Arabia
Iraq
Turkey
Jordan
Morocco

Who Are We?



EQUIPPING WOMEN TO MOBILIZE

As a network, we seek to share positive stories about how religious freedom can work for the common good, showcasing the benefits of pluralism in promoting peace and prosperity globally.

Since 2021, we have been thrilled to leverage three strategies to empower women as religious freedom advocates. It is our hope that we can "stand up for religious freedom for everyone, everywhere" in the following ways:

- Train influencers in religious freedom and digital media tools
- Create compelling content, including TV, short films, social media, print, and podcasts
- Collaborate in distributing media projects to advance pluralistic societies

Together, we partner with business leaders, academics, NGOs, and faith organizations to equip religious freedom advocates. Since early 2021, we have equipped over 1,500 women (and men) through our digital strategies. Our collective efforts contribute to the larger movement of training female leaders and keeping the doors open for religious liberty worldwide.



PROJECT PLAN:

- Phase 1- Film Competition
- Phase 2- eCourse
- Phase 3- Media Fellowship

The Impact

Founder and Executive Director, Shirin Taber, reports, "one of the fastest ways for women to shift the culture is through media." In the process of creating media tools, the women become more confident in addressing religious restrictions that keep them from reaching their full potential.

Through our three strategies, which include an annual Film Competition, an eCourse and Media Training Fellowship, women are equipped to engage their communities through story telling and digital media.

Our women's films have been showcased at top venues like International Religious Freedom Summits, the United Nations, the State Department, humanitarian events and among parliamentarians, scholars, lawyers, CEOs and faith leaders. As a result, we are seeing our digital media shift attitudes to support women's agency and freedom of belief.



Number of Women Participating:

Media Trainings - 500
E-Course - 3.000
Pakistan Fellowship - 90

Phase 1:

Religious Freedom Film Competition

Through the film competition and screenings, thousands have been inspired to consider the benefits of pluralism. Our films share the importance of freedom of religion in fostering women's rights, peace-building, and thriving societies. The short film format has proved to be an effective way to transmit religious freedom messages through social media, the press, and leadership events.

The film competition winners are recognized through monetary prizes, press releases, and film screenings to showcase their accomplishments.

The competition creates a platform where women can share their messages among mixed audiences. Many of the participants receive international recognition as new doors are opened to advance their careers.



GRAND PRIZE:
"SHE MAKES EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL" (\$3,500)
BY WAGMA FEROZ (PAKISTAN)



She Makes Everything Beautiful tells the true story of Sonia, a Christian, who finds employment in a multi-faith salon in Swat, Pakistan. The Muslim owner of the salon hires religious minority women knowing they are discriminated against and often cannot find work. This salon dares to overcome cultural and religious divides to make all things beautiful.

Phase 2:

Live What You Believe eCourse



LIVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE is an interactive eCourse that explores how freedom of belief contributes to peaceful and stable societies, empowers women, and encourages business innovation. Discussion questions and curriculum accompany this 4-part docudrama series.

E- Course Includes:

- 4 short films
- discussion questions
- reflection activities
- evaluation
- certificate of completion

Since early 2021, over 3,000 individuals from over 30 countries have completed the e-course worldwide. The participants are stakeholders, policy makers, lawyers, educators, students, business people, faith leaders, and human rights advocates. The films include Arabic, Farsi, and French subtitles.

The highest number of students originate from Pakistan and Afghanistan.



"Cultivating freedom of belief unleashes creativity and innovation which is needed more than ever in our increasingly global world." - Jacqueline Isaac, International Attorney

80% of the population lives with restrictions on freedom of belief

Phase 3:

Religious Freedom Media Training Fellowship

EQUIPPING MEDIA ADVOCATES

According to the US State Department, Pakistan is one of the greatest religious freedom violators in the world. Women and minorities suffer the most. A growing number of stakeholders want training to counter religious-based conflict. Due to overwhelming requests, we are leading 9-month media training fellowship to educate, equip and empower Pakistani females as religious freedom media advocates.

Mentors guide the 30 Pakistani women through the media development process. As a result, participants produce contextualized media to share the benefits of religious freedom for their communities. Their stories not only address taboo subjects like blasphemy laws or child marriage, but the benefit of religious freedom for thriving societies. We believe this media training initiative can open doors for religious liberty in Pakistan for the years to come.

FELLOWSHIP INCLUDES:

- Synchronous online workshops (2 hours a month)
- Homework assignments (10 hours a month)
- Development of media goals and plan of action
- Communication with mentors and trainers
- Production of a media project by June 1, 2022.

SEPTEMBER 2021
TO
JUNE 2022



We partner with strategic Pakistani organizations to carefully select 30 leaders to develop media projects to advance religious freedom in their Muslim-majority context.

This fellowship showcases the benefits of religious freedom to develop peaceful, prosperous societies, with a special focus on women's empowerment.

Meet Some Women in the Fellowship



WAGMA FEROZ

Wagma is a freelance journalist from northwestern Pakistan with a focus on women's rights, psychological trauma, and minority issues. She is the CEO of "Da Torsaro Saddar," a women's rights organization in Peshawar.

SANA ZAHID

Sana was born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. After facing many challenges, she earned a postgraduate degree in media sciences and fulfilled her passion to be a media professional. Sana works as an assistant producer at Pak 7.



NARGUA AZHAR

Nargua runs an organization called "Light for the Nations". Through this organization, she helps marginalized women by providing them with skills and entrepreneurship training. She works with local lawyers to better help women and young girls in her community.

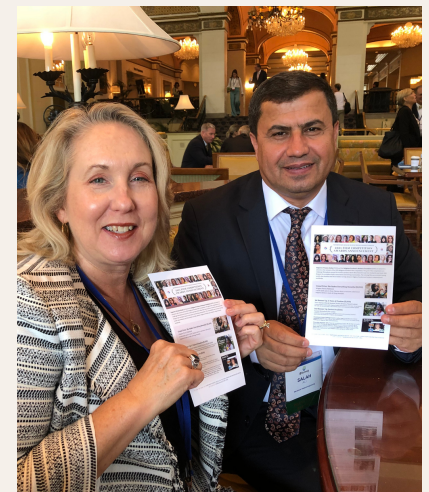
ZEENAT BIBI

Zeenat is a journalist, broadcaster, and blogger. She is also the founder of genderlens.pk, the first women-led digital news platform in northwest Pakistan. She covers the issues being faced by oppressed segments of society, including women, children, and religious minorities. She has been working in the field of journalism and mass communication for the last twelve years.



Expected Outcomes

- Train **30 women leaders** and influencers for religious freedom inside Pakistan
- Provide monthly online instruction with seasoned media producers and subject matter experts, **September 2021-June 2022**
- Offer curricula and homework assignments, which lead to media project development
- Produce 10 original media projects that advance religious freedom and women's empowerment
- Craft digital media content as "conversation starters" to address women's felt needs
- Model for participants how to support religious freedom through their networks
- Develop media tools that can be shared one-to-one and in large groups
- Distribute among NGOs and faith-based organizations and at religious freedom summits
- Offer **cash prizes** to the "Top" Media Projects (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place)
- One million people will be impacted through our collaborative spheres of influence (social media, press releases, screenings, forums, NGOs, ministries, and human rights groups).





Thank you for your continued
partnership and support.

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