

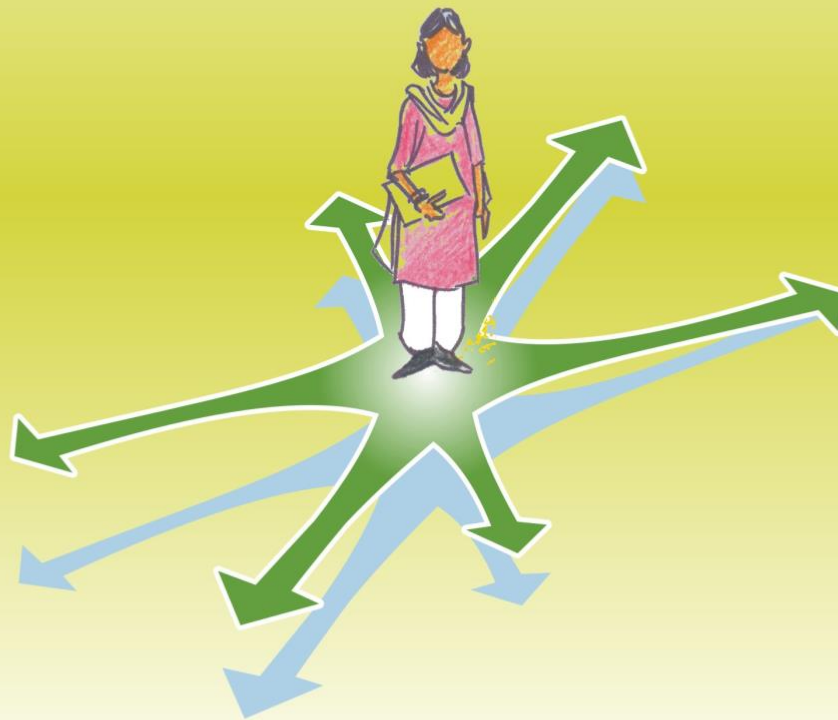
Draft Final Report

Establishing a Gender Sensitive Career Counseling

CHOICES

HELPING WOMEN MAKE BETTER CAREER

Reducing Disparities in Employment through Effective Career Counseling for Women in Pakistan



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The ability to manage one's career, choose one's life-career goals, and gather learning and working experiences in order to maintain career sustainability and self fulfillment has become one of the most crucial strategic skills to be mastered.

(Trachtenberg, Streumer & Zolingen)

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Shahzad Bukhari

Team Leader

(GM, FCG Human Capital, Private Limited)

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ACRONYMS

AJK	Azad Jammu Kashmir
CC	Career Counseling
CDCs	Career Development Centers
CSO	Career Services Office
EICs	Establishing Employment Information
FCG	Four Corners Group
FCGHC	FCG Human Capital
FGDs	Focus group discussions
GRAP	Gender Reform Action Plan
GU	Greenwich University
HR	human resource
IBA	Institute of Business Administration
IDIs	In-Depth Interviews
ILO	International Labour Organization
KPK	Khyber Pakhtoon Khaw
KU	University of Karachi
LUMS	Lahore University of Management Sciences
NCDA	National Career Development Association
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
WEE	Women Empowerment through Employment
WEFCS	Women's Employment Facilitation Centers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers the entire course of the CHOICES project, which was conceptualized as the pilot test of an action-based research initiative attempting to reduce gender disparities by introducing gender sensitive career counseling. CHOICES itself represents the career counseling centre that was the planned outcome of the project activities. Three educational institutions, Institute of Management Sciences (Peshawar, KPK), University of Peshawar (Peshawar, KPK) and the University of Karachi (Karachi, Sind) provided resource persons who participated in the project and are now in the process of establishing CHOICES units at each of these institutions.

Due to the prevalent absence of any formal career counseling facilities that account for individual interests and skills, it was felt that career counseling in itself is greatly needed to promote employment and productivity in Pakistan. Moreover, the prevalent gender inequalities and the absence of gender mainstreaming led to the understanding that for individualized, specialized and effective career counseling, gender sensitivity must be introduced to the process.

The CHOICES project was planned in four separate phases. The first of these was a combination of secondary and primary research that was conducted to fulfill two basic objectives. The first was to reveal local and international perspectives and practices in career counseling, and the second was to identify the gaps within and need for career counseling facilities in Pakistan. Qualitative primary research methods covering a wide range of stakeholders and certain key organizations were operationalized to act as a needs assessment.

The needs assessment and the desk review findings were used in the second phase of the project, to develop material to build the capacities of key resources persons from three participating institutions.

In the third phase, a four-day workshop, this material was used to train these resource persons in the concept and practice of career counseling, the role and understanding of gender concepts in counseling as well as how to establish a CHOICES unit within their respective institution.

As part of the third phase, the workshop was duly evaluated by participants, who found it to have been a positive and useful experience in terms of understanding basic career counseling skills and concepts, and recognizing the influence of gender on women's work as well as learning strategies to overcome gender-related challenges. An informal monitoring mechanism is currently in place, using an action planning checklist developed during the workshop session.

The fourth phase of the pilot test is in the form of this report, meant to document the entire process and provide insight into the way forward. Therefore, this report concludes with key lessons and recommendations for subsequent replication generated from the research, material development and workshop implementation involved in this pilot test. It is strongly recommended to replicate this project on a broader scale, over a longer duration of time to allow for in-depth planning and monitoring, and covering educational institutions from more urban and rural locations.

BACKGROUND

Career counseling is a process in which people's interests, personality, values and skills are assessed and they are helped to explore career options. Career counseling provides one-on-one or group professional assistance in exploration and decision making tasks related to choosing a major/occupation, transitioning into the world of work or further professional training.

Career counseling takes care of various aspects like personal insight, support and even a better understanding. Other than these, it helps in building high motivational level by understanding the individualistic wants. It ensures that every individual sets up some goals of consequence and give his/her best in achieving them. The best part about career counseling is that it inspires every individual to make a career for themselves in a field where their interest and passion lie. By doing so, it aids every individual to discover his/her own powers and the success he/she can find nowhere else but within him/her self.

Career counseling helps women and men realize their potential, preparing them to face real-life challenges with composure. It helps them identify and choose appropriate career paths, and most importantly shows them how to achieve excellence in their selected careers.

Guidance and counseling include a wide range of activities:

- Activities within schools to help students clarify career goals and understand the world of work
- Personal or group-based assistance with decisions about initial courses of study, courses of vocational training, further education and training, initial job choice, job change, or work force re-entry
- Computer-based or on-line services to provide information about jobs and careers or to help individuals make career choices; and services to produce and disseminate information about jobs, courses of study and vocational training.

Importance of career counseling within education system and labor market

Guidance and counseling services are important; both to education systems and to the labour market. Career guidance has an important role to play within education in laying the foundations for lifelong career development. Here, wider curriculum choice results in more diverse and complex routes into later stages of education, into employment, or into both. This can help to:

Reduce	Improve	Create
Dropouts from and back-tracking within education systems, and thus improve internal flows	Flows between different levels of education, thus raising national levels of educational attainment	Transitions from education to the labour market

Within the labour market, guidance and counseling can improve the accuracy and accessibility of the information available to individuals about short- and long-term job opportunities. In turn, this can improve individual decision making about jobs and about job training opportunities. It also makes a key difference between the successful and unsuccessful implementation of active labour market programs.

CAREER COUNSELING IN PAKISTAN

In Pakistan the literacy rate is low and people are generally not aware of the importance of career guidance. Many parents force their children to choose the field they want for them, instead of allowing them to choose a career as per their own interests and aspirations.

The need for career guidance and counseling in Pakistan has grown significantly during the last few years. This is because of the following factors:

Lack of informed, relevant and clear guidance

Rapid changes in technology, and lack of knowledge to cope with these changes

Lack of trained counselors in career guidance

Very few career-counseling facilities are available in the country and these are mostly run by private educational institutes or by the civil society organizations. Brief description of these facilities is given below:

- a) **Formal Career Counseling:** Following the 2005 earthquake, the ILO supported the Government of Khyber-Pakhtoon kha (KP) and the Government of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) in establishing Employment Information Centers (EICs) for career counseling. Alongside an online database of job seekers, these centers also developed both formal and informal counseling mechanisms, through which many men and women were registered and supported in their respective fields of work.

Women's Employment Facilitation Centers (WEFCS) were also set up in Khairpur and Sukkur under the aegis of the ILO's national WEC-PK project, in a collaborative exercise with LEAD Pakistan, a local NGO¹. The WEFCS were developed to fulfill the needs of local women seeking employment alongside skill building measures aimed to help them improve their income levels.

- b) **Career Development Centers established by GRAP in Public Sector Universities:** Seven Career Development Centers (CDCs) were also set up in public universities nationally by the Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) – an initiative of Ministry of Women's Development¹. With ILO support, GRAP trained 10 managers at five CDCs in five universities of Punjab. The training aimed to guide these managers regarding the basics of career counseling and the standard procedures for running these centers.
- c) **Career Counseling in Educational Institutes:** Career Guidance Centers also exist in many private sector universities and other educational institutions. They aim to support students in the process of selecting appropriate institutions for their future career. The Centers tend to encourage students towards Public Service Placements and assist them in attaining decision-making positions. This report covers the current CC services at some key educational institutions in Pakistan.
- d) **Civil Society Initiatives:** Using programs for training, job-search, career counseling and placement at appropriate workplaces, some civil society organizations are also piloting some initiatives to support the career development of young men and women. For example the Human Resource Development Network has implemented a "Women Empowerment through Employment (WEE)" project². Another international organization i.e. Care has also established Career Development Centers in different parts of the country.

¹ Source ILO Concept for Career Counseling

² Source ILO Concept for Career Counseling

STATUS OF CAREER COUNSELING FOR GIRLS/WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

In Pakistan the available career counseling services are short of many basic requirements, for instance: counselors are rarely trained and qualified to advise others, the Counseling Centers are not properly equipped, information about current issues is usually outdated, and there is a lack of specific focus on gender issues in the world of work.

It is observed that girls outnumber boys in many educational institutes of Pakistan. However the labor market displays minimal representation of women. The labor force participation rate for women in Pakistan is 22% while for men it is 82%.³ Despite having the required qualification, women are not entering the job market the way one may expect them to. One of the reasons for this peculiar trend is the absence of proper career guidance for women which can reduce their own and their families' apprehensions regarding various jobs and equips these women with skills which are required for dealing with the various real-life gender issues they might have to face once they join the labor force. For instance:

- The definition of sexual harassment and how should it be dealt with, including the legal options /protections available to workers.
- Orientation on the general restricted mobility of women and how to counter issues related to it.
- How to deal with in-conducive work environments, particularly where there is lack of women friendly facilities at most of the offices such as daycare for children, separate washrooms etc.
- How issues related with glass ceiling, glass walls and sticky floors can be managed
- How to combine familial responsibilities with work etc.
- Confidence building and learning assertiveness

Thus, a gender-focused career guidance program can incorporate the above considerations and ensure equal benefits for women participation in the workforce. Specifically, the following gender aspects in relation to career guidance need to be considered:

- Equal access to career guidance services by women and men
- Availability of qualified and properly trained counselors
- Reduction of stereotyping of female and male roles and career aspirations in guidance services
- Discouragement of occupational segregation
- Promotion of work-life balance for both women and men
- Gender-aware promotion of entrepreneurship

³ ILO Pakistan Employment Trends for Women, 2009 (Series No. 5)

NEED FOR FEMALE FOCUSED CAREER COUNSELING

Within Pakistan, career counseling in general and of women in particular has not received due attention, owing to the often-followed course of familial or peer influence that decides students' career choices. While basic career counseling mechanisms are in place, they are hence not as evolved as current times demand. Due to the prevalent gender segregation within Pakistan, female students are more vulnerable to making career decisions influenced by social norms rather than rational, utility-maximizing features. In its present form, career counseling fails to account for the gendered realities of students when providing options for their future career paths. Hence, many women are unprepared for the challenges and bottlenecks they will face as working professionals. Keeping this in consideration, it is felt that there is a great need to guide the career decisions of female students in particular, toward fields that would be of greater value to their personal development, as well as Pakistan's economic development.

Career counseling is understood to include services and programs designed to facilitate individuals' development and their ability to make optimal choices regarding their roles in occupational, familial and social structures	Responsible professional practice requires counselors to be knowledgeable about the effects of gendering human development and to apply such knowledge in career counseling with girls and women with respect to specific cultures they belong to.	In order to ensure responsible professional practice, jurisdictions must require all individuals involved in career counseling with girls and women to adhere to the gender specific guidelines.
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The environmental influences affecting women vary considerably with regards to their cultural background. It is obvious that the cultural expectations of women differ depending on whether they belong to urban or rural set up. Moreover, work options also differ according the socio-cultural and economic setting of these women. Therefore, considerable attention is required to contextualize career guidance arrangements to provide equal opportunities for personal and economic development for women within the relevant socio-cultural environment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PILOT PROJECT - CHOICES

The Based on the previously outlined situational context, the CHOICES project was developed in line with the objectives of the ILO's 'Towards Gender Parity' project. It was intended to achieve the following:

- Explore the role of effective career counseling in enhancing women's employment
- Identify gaps in the current practices of counseling with particular focus on women's issues and recommend measures to overcome them through effective career counseling
- Sensitize relevant institutions about the standard practices of career guidance and about incorporating gender aspects in their work
- Develop a model of gender-responsive career counseling program, and;
- Compare implementation and effectiveness of gender-responsive career counseling programs in urban and rural set-up.

The development of gender sensitive guidelines and tools was conceptualized as a stepping stone to training counselors and supervisors in translating these guidelines into practice. This practical application of the said training was to result in the establishment of a career counseling unit, i.e. 'CHOICES' unit. FCGHC, in partnership with ILO and other partners, through this project, has structured activities in a manner such that the guidelines and training can work together to advance the practice of career counseling for girls and women.

PROJECT IN A NUT SHELL

The activities designed to achieve the objectives outlined as follows.

Part 1: Desk Review and Assessment

1. **Desk Review:** A detailed desk review was conducted to map the existing career counseling centers and services available in Pakistan, especially in Sind and Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa.
2. **Review of Existing Practices:** The existing practices, documents and data (level of satisfaction and existing success cases with respect to males and females) in urban and rural set-up were reviewed.

Part 2: Rapid Research

1. A rapid assessment was implemented to identify gaps with respect to gender sensitization in the counseling currently provided at certain key institutions in Pakistan. Rapid research was conducted to collect comments, feedback and perspectives on current CCCs (Career Counseling Centers) and need for improved CCCs. The research was meant to generate a picture of cultural stereotypes and expectations surrounding working women in urban and rural Pakistan and the need for CCCs to account for these in order to effectively promote women's employment.
2. The research was operationalized through focus group discussions (FGDs), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), meetings and consultations with men and women in different academic and professional spheres, as well as their families.
3. Dialogue was also initiated with various stakeholders associated with career development activities i.e. professionals, psychologist, career centers, and private and government employers. The purpose of the research was to discover employers' points of views with respect to demand for women's employment, opportunities and skills in the labour market.

Part 3: Identification, Capacity Building and Pilot of CCC Research

1. **Selection of Institutions:** Three institutions for higher education in Sind and Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa were invited to participate in the pilot project.
2. **Material Development:** Based on desk review and rapid research, material collected from CCCs, and inputs from resource persons, a draft of gender sensitive guidelines for career counseling was developed to be piloted in the three participating universities.
3. **Capacity Building:** The key resource persons of the CC (Career Counseling) department or function were shortlisted for capacity building activities to promote female focused career counseling. It was expected that an international career-counseling expert would conduct the capacity building session.
4. **Implementation:** The draft guidelines were thus implemented in three potential centers with a monitoring checklist of issues. The issues, comments, suggestions and lessons were incorporated in this report.
5. **Management Documents and Tools:** A range of documentation is expected to be available in CCCs for long-term support and networking. This includes a directory of organizations and departments for career opportunities, lists of trainings and institutions for career development, a directory of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working for skills enhancement, a list of microcredit institutions

with detailed information about services available, a directory of experts, and finally, a directory of alumnae. A job portal for employees and employers alike is also expected to be available.

Part 4:

Documentation & Monitoring

1. **Documentation:** This final report is meant to document the entire process of project development and implementation, along with learning's and recommendations, to allow for subsequent replication of this pilot test.
2. **Evaluation:** The evaluation of the success of the project is based on the response received from participating institutions. Monitoring of the effectiveness of the capacity building activities in terms of assisting the establishment of gender sensitive CC units – 'CHOICES' – is to follow in the months preceding this report. The stakeholders will once again be involved to get their feedback on the effectiveness of gender sensitive guidelines for career counseling and its implementation in both urban and rural set-up. A short (few pager) impact assessment report will be shared with funding agency as complimentary document.

1

Part

DESK REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

1. PRIMARY REVIEW: PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES IN CAREER COUNSELING

Various handbooks and guides from international resources have stressed the role of career counseling in achieving personal growth and satisfaction as well as raising productivity at work, which translates into economic growth. Career counseling in developed countries is seen to exist at a much more evolved state than in developing countries. For example, career development theory is a recognized discipline established over two decades ago in the United States of America. The United States today also has a National Career Development Association (NCDA) and the Career Development Quarterly, a publication established in 1989 that covers developments, history and achievements in the field of career development.⁴ It would not be incorrect to say that career counseling has evolved and continues to grow into an art that is widely practiced across the United States. The Georgia Southwestern State University, for instance, publishes its own Career Counseling Guide, which begins with a chapter on self awareness for students, teaching students how to assess their own strengths, weaknesses and interests.⁵ The American International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) stresses the role of career counselors in assisting people to understand and create meaningful purpose in their lives where choices are absent.

In developed countries there is also a prevalence of governmental assistance or positive reinforcement for the development of successful and promising careers. Nova Scotia's government's Public Service wing has been working to promote job opportunities to citizens in collaboration with CareerBeacon.com, a job portal. The website enables users to browse through job descriptions, classifications, and application deadlines posted categorically and chronologically. The government's own website also has links to departmental websites where further information on each department including organizational hierarchies, contact information for key personnel and other information is available. Singapore enables Singaporean residents as well as international students to apply for a Ministry of Employment subsidy on their tuition fee. This subsidy cuts back on the costs of education, and in exchange for the subsidy, recipients are required to work for three years in Singapore. This reinforces career productivity. At the same time, though Singapore has a limited number of universities, the government is proactive in promoting optimal utilization of these facilities through this subsidy.⁶

Jan Tucker (2007) describes the changes in women's employment in the United States that resulted from active reinforcement of nondiscriminatory hiring practices: "Research indicates that only 19% of women were in the workforce in 1900 compared to 80% of men (Powell & Graves, 2003). These percentages remained relatively unchanged until the 1950's. The number of women earning bachelor's degrees doubled from 1950-2000. The postponement of marriage coupled with increases in employment and

⁴ NCDA History & Mission www.associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/about

⁵ Georgia Southwestern State University, The Career Counseling Guide www.gsw.edu/~career

⁶ Ministry of Employment, Singapore, FAQs: Service Obligation Scheme. sam11.moc.gov.sg/tass/menu/faq_sopg.pdf

educational opportunities for women, led to more women taking on managerial roles in the workplace."⁷

The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published the Handbook on Career Counseling in 1998, which stresses two dual assumptions.⁸ The first being that there are great similarities in career concerns on a global level, which made it urgent and necessary for national and international collaborations regarding issues of career development. The second assumption was that career counseling in its practical implementation will be affected by local concerns and cultures. Hence, the Handbook provided generic yet useful and easily localizable tools and guidelines for effective career counseling. The UNESCO Handbook also presents an interesting example of a career framework developed by Patton & McMahon (1999). The basis of the framework is the importance of "society and the environment along with individual differences such as gender, values, sexual orientation, ability, disability, interests, skills, age, world-of-work knowledge, physical attributes, aptitudes, ethnicity, self-concept, personality, beliefs, and health

The framework is based on the individual's interaction with social systems surround him or her, which includes educational institutions, peers, family members, community, professional spaces and the media, which in turn are influenced by and interact with geographical location, political landscapes, history, globalization, labour demand and supply and socioeconomic status. This framework clearly pinpoints a comprehensive point of departure for any career counseling, whether it is directed toward women or men.

⁷ Jan Tucker (2007), Gender and Work: Differences between Men and Women (Aug 12 2007) www.suite101.com/content/gender-and-work-a28597

⁸ UNESCO (1998), Handbook on Career Counseling. Paris.

2. SECONDARY AND PRIMARY RESEARCH: EXISTING CC INITIATIVES

a) Career Development Centers (CDCs), USAID Jobs Project

The USAID Jobs Project is intended to boost the employment of men and women who are fresh graduates, unemployed, or other types of job applicants, by establishing CDCs in various (approx 15) institutions across Pakistan. The Jobs Project provides training for career guidance staff working with students, necessary equipment to facilitate the activities of the CDCs, and augment skills training in highly demanded areas to boost employability. A network of local, financially sustainable CDCs is seen as the end result of the project, with its eventual scaling up to include fifty CDCs nationwide. Visits to USAID CDCs set up through CARE, an international NGO, have revealed that there were no visible indicators or checklists available or structured databases to maintain placement. The CDCs visited lacked vibrant entrepreneurship, which would have been vital for their proposed financial self sustainability. Most importantly, while the quality of training provided to staff and liaison for skill building were commendable, there was no institutionalized concept of gender present in the CDCs. However, it must be considered that the current CDCs set up by the Project are pilot tests, which will be replicated on a larger scale after fine-tuning.

b) Greenwich University⁹ (GU)

The present CC unit at GU is a combination of the USAID Jobs initiative and existing career services. The three counselors currently working there have received specialized training from the USAID Jobs project, and are expected to fulfill the aims of the project as well as provide career counseling services to GU students. While the core department is small, faculty and administrative staff provide support to the counselors, who arrange for or engage in skill-building exercises for students, direct interpersonal counseling, and building networks of students and potential employers. While GU does not keep a formal sex disaggregated record of its students' placement, counselors estimated that the ratio of women to men in placements is 3:2. The CC unit at GU uses the campus quarterly magazine, flyers, banners and the GU website to advertise its activities, which also include hosting job fairs and arranging information sessions by employers. However, counselors suggested that gender enters into counseling not through a structured or systematic approach, but rather through a personal and intuitive understanding of gender.

a) Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)

LUMS has separate CC services for Masters Students and Bachelors students, within the umbrella of the Career Services Office (CSO). The services extended by the CSO cover job/internship placement, networking with employers, and a job portal. While LUMS graduates enjoy career opportunities from varied occupational areas within the public and private sector, there is no record of women's placement as compared to men's. The career counseling services available tend to be focused toward advising students according to their major, linking students with internships related to their choice of major to provide exposure, and helping students prepare resumes and cover letters. The CSO has a job portal powered by Rozee.pk, regular job fairs, and presentations and testing by local as well as international

⁹ Meeting with Mian Mohammad Afzal and Tahira Khan, counselors at GU.

employers. It makes use of electronic mail as well as flyers and banners around campus to advertise its activities to students, and maintains a database of alumni in coordination with the Alumni Services Office. While the CSO at LUMS is larger, more established and more structured than what is present in many universities, the concept of career counseling as has been defined by this project is largely absent. In particular, gender as an incorporated and measured theme within career counseling seems to be missing.¹⁰

b) Institute of Management Sciences (IM Sciences)

There is one CDC at the IM Sciences, also established by the USAID Jobs project. However, the focus of the CDC appears to be purely on placement rather than a greater element of counseling. While it is intended to cater to both, men and women students, there is no focus on gender sensitivity in the CDC's operations. It was observed that the staff is in place, and the material including systems and signage have been provided by USAID, along with one capacity building training for staff. However, there is no prioritization of women's employment at the center, nor was there any gender impact assessment available.

c) University of Karachi (KU) – Women's Study Center¹¹

The KU as an institution does not have a formalized CC unit. However, there are individual faculty members attempting to provide this facility to students at the departmental level, mostly in their capacity as heads of department. The motivation for this effort was claimed to be the promotion of the department and its graduates rather than the promotion of gender sensitive career development or placement. While there is huge demand for KU graduates to work in internships, research positions and other forms of employment, the University lacks a one-stop-shop to manage this demand efficiently and ensure optimal placement of its graduates. Gender is not accounted for in the scattered CC done by individuals, except in the Women's Studies department, where gender itself is a key theme of study. Hence it informally enters into the CC provided by members of the department.

d) Institute of Business Administration (IBA)¹²

The IBA has a CDC unit established for the purpose of providing its students a competitive edge in the employers' market. The CDC provides a range of services to employers and students, ranging from Career Fairs, on-campus recruitment, job posting, career workshops, alumni database, fresh graduates' directory and information sessions to mock interviews, mentoring sessions, and linkage building with student societies. CDC activities include human resource forums, employers' assessment tests, and annual dinners. However, the CDC does not appear to have a focus on interpersonal counseling or on gender as an area of consideration in career development services.

¹⁰ www.cso.lums.edu.pk and alumni responses

¹¹ Meeting with Ms. Shagufta Khan at Women's Studies Centre, KU

¹² http://www.iba.edu.pk/CDC/CDC_Upcoming_event.html

<http://www.iba.edu.pk/CDC/IBAHRFForum.htm>

http://www.iba.edu.pk/CDC/CDC_Upcoming_event.html

http://www.iba.edu.pk/CDC/CDC_Upcoming_event.html

e) University of Peshawar – Psychology Department¹³

The psychology department at the University of Peshawar offers intermittent counseling services through its lecturers, senior management and some students. However, there is no official CC unit, nor is the counseling provided by the psychology department focused on career development. It is more interpersonal psychotherapeutic counseling, without a formal emphasis on gender.

¹³ Meeting with Maliha Hasan at the University of Peshawar's Psychology Department

3. FINDINGS OF PRIMARY & SECONDARY RESEARCH

The above briefs on existing CDC set ups in Pakistan indicate that while some private educational institutions tend to offer systematized, structured and intensive career development opportunities to their students, the focus is on promoting overall placement rather than individualized guidance and development of career paths. Moreover, even in these highly developed career services units, there is an absence of any formal recognition of women's' culturally-affected employment opportunities or employment situations. Gender is not an institutionalized theme entering into the CDCs' activities, nor in counseling as has been understood by the project – an individually-tailored and culturally adjusted process of development – present in any form at these facilities.

The career counseling that may be individualized and gender sensitive is offered by individuals within institutions on an informal basis. Here, the understanding of gender is intuitive rather than learned through specialized training. Even where capacity building initiatives have been exercised, such as in the USAID Jobs Project CDCs, there is no emphasis on gender. Rather, counselors have tended to include gender on the basis of their interpersonal interaction with counselees. These findings thus not only indicate the dire need for gender to be introduced at the institutional level across the board, as a core element of counseling, but also signal the need for specialized training in career counseling itself.

Part 2

RAPID RESEARCH

1. OVERVIEW

Career counseling for the purposes of the CHOICES project, in accordance with the brief provided by the ILO, has been understood to be a process through which the interests, values and skills of individuals are assessed alongside their personality type, to help guide them toward the most personally rewarding careers. The theory behind effective career counseling is that by increasing the likelihood of personal satisfaction, it will raise productivity. At the same time, by enabling individuals to make the choices best suited to their situational contexts without compromising their areas of interest or passion, career counseling is an essential input in promoting empowered career choices that lead to successful career development. It ranges from activities in schools to promote an understanding of work, to assistance (personal or group-based) about choices of study or career decisions, and online availability of information regarding career development or change opportunities. This understanding of career counseling formed the conceptual basis and point of departure for the rapid research conducted in the second phase of the CHOICES project.

The purpose of the research was to generate a picture of the ground realities of working men and women's career choices, particularly in terms of the cultural constraints and opportunities they are faced with, in order to assess what is needed to localize gender sensitive career counseling in Pakistan. Due to the subjective nature of the variable being examined, the research design was purely qualitative in nature, using a methodology that combined FGDs and IDIs with different stakeholders and actors in the Pakistani world of work. Participants/respondents thus included men and women either currently studying, freshly graduated or unemployed, and working in the human resource functions of varied organizations. The findings of the rapid research study indicate immense cultural influence on the career choices of both men, and women, as well as on the employer's perspective on hiring women and men. The study also generated perceptions of what is lacking in terms of career guidance itself, as well as the representation of gender in any existing career counseling facilities or initiatives that the participants/respondents had had the opportunity to partake of. These findings were incorporated in the model of gender-sensitive career counseling that was developed in the subsequent phase of the project and imparted to participating institutions through a four-day capacity building workshop.

2. RAPID RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & DESIGN

A qualitative research methodology combining IDIs and FGDs was used to accomplish the objectives of the rapid research, as per the following design:

FGDs were conducted with diverse groups of participants. The groups included men and women who were final year students, fresh but unemployed graduates, and their families or guardians. IDIs were conducted with the human resource (HR) managers and officials working in government/social sector and private sector organizations.

a) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Four FGDs were conducted in order to collect sufficient information regarding the effectiveness of current facilities for career counseling and career guidance, as well as the cultural factors entering into individuals' career choices. The benefit of FGDs for such a purpose is that they enable participants to interact and share their views in a safe environment. Each FGD lasted for approximately 120 minutes, with a one-way mirror allowing for observation of the group without disturbing group dynamics. The pre-screening of participants via a questionnaire enabled a level of social and geographical homogeneity within each group, ensuring minimal conflict between respondents. Outputs from the FGDs were thus highly productive. A moderator ensured that the group did not deviate from the topics at hand. A 'ladder-up' approach was utilized, moving from broad conceptual areas to narrower and specific target areas, i.e. career counseling. FGD findings are thus presented in the same manner.

The participant breakup of the four FGDs was as follows:¹⁴

Cities	Female		Male		Total
	Last semester of graduation and post-graduation degree	Unemployed & completed graduate / post-graduate degree	Last semester of graduation and post-graduation degree	Unemployed & completed graduate / post-graduate degree	
Karachi	1	-	-	1	2
Peshawar	-	1	1	-	2
Total	1	1	1	1	4

Key Insights from FGDs

- i. **Perceptions of Education:** Education was seen as an essential part of life by all participants. They tended to see it as a lifetime asset that was beneficial in all areas of life, helping in:
 - Grooming individual personality
 - Increasing awareness
 - Building the power of critical thought
 - Working toward a better or ideal society
 - Earning a better living and being self sufficient

¹⁴ Annex 01 provides a list of individual FGD participants

ii. **Images of Education:** The following functional and emotive images were associated with education:

Colleges	Universities	Classrooms
Teachers	Friends	Books
Subjects	Role models or ideal personalities, e.g. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan	

iii. **The Role of Education:** Participants saw education as having a multiplier effect, exercising limitless benefits over the short- and long-term, with an important role to play in individual achievements as well as entrepreneurship.

At the individual level, education was seen to be the means to confidence building, learning to interact with different people, developing problem-solving abilities, being motivated, changing or improving one's lifestyle, and increasing religious or worldly awareness. At the entrepreneurial level, education was seen as the instrument for stimulating higher earnings, and enabling economic growth by aiding the development of more efficient and effective strategies for high returns.



“Jiasee hum life sooch rahay hotay hain, education say humain wahi life mil jatee hai”
(Karachi and Peshawar Females)

“Sahee ghalat ko pehchanay main asani hoti hai”
(Karachi and Peshawar females)

“Self grooming hoti hai k logon say kistarah baat karni chahyee”
(Peshawar Males)

iv. **Perceptions about Careers:** Spontaneously, many respondents associated careers with learning, earning and growth at the professional level. A career was related to short-term planning meant to achieve long-term goals, linked to a feeling of where one sees oneself in the future. Careers were seen to have multiple benefits, both monetary as well as non-monetary, as follows:

Settling down in life	Earning respect in society	Having an individual identity
Independence	Comfortable family life	A higher living standard
Serving the country	Greater monetary benefits	

v. **Popularly Recalled Careers:** Respondents stated the following occupations as examples of careers:

Medicine	Engineering	Marketing
Accounting	Architecture	Banking
Human Resource	Business	Science
Technology	Politics	Academics

Law	Judiciary	Policy making
Armed forces	Landowning	Real estate
Singing	Fashion designing	Directing
Photography	Acting	Modeling
Journalism	Painting	Beautification
Small business (e.g. shop owning)	Travel agencies	Hospitality & Hotel Management

vi. **Modes of Career Awareness:** Participants claimed that awareness of the abovementioned careers came from the external environment itself, as well as family members, friends and the media. However, they clarified that they did not possess specialized knowledge of any of the careers or occupations they had mentioned, and only had detailed information of the career they had selected. Some participants also stated that they were only aware of the title names of some of the careers listed by them. The assumption that parents, particularly fathers, possess more specialized knowledge of some of these careers was widely expressed. It was based on the notion that their superior knowledge comes from having greater experience and exposure to the world of work. However, students also claimed that parents did not have detailed insight of all or most of the abovementioned careers, and generally had more experience and knowledge of their own career.

vii. **Modes of Guidance for Career Selection:** Universally, it was stated that guidance for career selection comes from the following figures:

Parents	Relatives	Teachers	Senior Peers
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Of these, parents were considered the most trustworthy source of guidance on the basis of their seniority, experience, and success. After this, teachers were reported to be the most credible source of guidance, since they were perceived as being well informed as well as knowledgeable about individual student's interests and abilities. Relatives were seen as important in the process of career selection to the extent that they were themselves engaged in unique or difficult career fields. Finally, older peers were mentioned because participants claimed they were in touch with the most recent opportunities and developments in different career fields.

viii. **Education and Career Selection:** Most participants agreed that education was highly important in the selection of future careers, as an educated person was better positioned to choose a field of his or her interest. On the contrary, a lack of education could negatively impact an effort to make the 'right' career choice.

A few participants expressed the view that in Pakistan's current environment, education was not effective in influencing careers in the long-term. They stated examples of qualified people working in menial occupations in order to make a living, and accorded this to the prevalence of corruption

and/or nepotism in most organizations.

- ix. **Research Prior to Career Selection:** Across both regions, only a few participants claimed they had done research on the careers they were considering for selection. Most claimed that they had selected their areas of study and future careers on the basis of their own interest.

The FGD revealed that women were less likely to research a potential career path than men. Men claimed to have browsed universities' websites and publications in addition to extracting information from different websites related to the field(s) they were considering.

- x. **Sex & Career:** Careers for both sexes:

According to participants, the following careers appeared to have no limitations in terms of opportunities for either sex:

- Medicine - An honorable and respected position serving the interests of humanity. Hard work and intelligence lead to success, and there is no inequality between men and women.
- Business - Both men and women could pursue business if they had intelligence, capital and ability to take risks.
- Accountancy - Has been a men-dominated field in the past but today is seeing rising numbers of women engaged in it. It requires intellect, dedication and leadership.

The following fields were seen as open to both sexes, but preferred by women, particularly according to participants from Karachi, Sind.

Media & Entertainment (particular occupations)	Fashion Design
Beauty	Sociology
Education	Pharmaceutical

Additionally, respondents from Karachi also expressed the opinion that sole proprietorships or partnerships in businesses such as beauty salons, restaurants, shopping malls and educational institutes could easily be run by women without the assistance of men.

- xi. **Careers Excluding Women:** Participants listed the following careers as precluding the entry of women. The broad reasons stated for these were that Pakistan is a patriarchal society where men are given more importance and priority than women, men are physically and mentally stronger, and are the main breadwinners of a family hence are more committed. The specific reasons for each career are listed alongside career titles, as follows:

- Armed Forces - Hiring men is a trend due to their superior mental and physical strength
- Engineering - Men are more able to go into the field and have greater mobility within cities
- Architecture - Men are more able to make field visits than women
- Judiciary - Women are more open to exploitation and harassment; this is a field purely

dominated by men who are tougher than women*

- Office/Clerical work - With reference to Peshawar, women working in offices were not treated respectfully or thought well of
 - Piloting - The long hours and extensive travelling are not suitable for women(*)
 - Sports - Has more men than women because men are more physically robust(*)
 - Customs - Requires greater and closer interaction with other men
 - Agriculture - Requires greater and closer interaction with other men
 - Landowning - Requires greater and closer interaction with other men
 - Manual Labour - Women are not physically able to do this
 - Vehicle Operation - Is not a respectable occupation for a woman
 - Auto mechanics - Is not a respectable occupation for a woman
- (* few recent examples will increase female interests in such professions)

xii. **Women and Careers:** Participants across both regions expressed the following concerns about pursuing careers:

- Early marriage leading to greater familial responsibilities
- 'Narrow-mindedness' of society regarding men and women working together
- A woman's opportunities for higher education are restricted by men in the family for fear of being unable to find a suitably qualified spouse
- Women are usually unable to deal with long working hours or engage in field work or travel within the city or out of the country

For the abovementioned reasons, the following careers were listed as being women-friendly in the sense that they were seen as most suited to women's situational constraints:

Teaching	Software Engineering	Call Centre Agents (Telemarketing)
Nursing	Fine Arts	Design
Beauty	Home Economics	Media

Women were seen as easily able to work in creative and skill-based professions as they were perceived as having shorter working hours. Moreover, if women were qualified, according to participants, they would also be able to opt for teaching, telemarketing or software engineering as these areas did not involve much interaction with men or need great mobility.

b) Career Counseling

Participants spontaneously connected career counseling with fundamental guidance for the selection of the right career. This is facilitated by family members and teachers to achieve an absolute position in the chosen career in the future. Role models like Allama Iqbal, or successful family members are also associated with career counseling because of their inspiring personalities.



i. **Importance of Career Counseling:** Participants understood that career counseling was important for the youth as its absence would result in the selection of the wrong career and an uncertain future. It was seen as significant as it enables students to fully explore a career in terms of the following:

- Pros and cons of different career choices
- Settled life with timely investments of effort
- Cost of training or education Future job opportunities

ii. **Pakistan and Career Counseling:** Across both regions participants claimed that there were no career counseling facilities in Pakistan. A few participants, men, in Karachi and Peshawar did recall some recruitment agencies that provided guidance for studies abroad with counseling. Besides this, only one woman from Karachi shared a CC experience, when the Institute of Chartered Accountants Pakistan scheduled a counseling session at their college to encourage students to join chartered accountancy.

Whereas men studying in Karachi mentioned that they had heard of some NGOs working on CC, but they had never attended such counseling sessions as they had no basic information to enable them to attend, such as:

- Are such sessions free of cost or not
- Are they regular or one-off events
- Who is leading such sessions, volunteers or experts

Furthermore educational institutes are not up to the mark in this sector. None of the school, colleges or universities currently provides counseling facilities to students. Due to the absence of

such facilities, teachers were seen as the most approachable and inspiring source for students.

iii. **Steps to Improve Career Counseling Facilities in Pakistan:** As outlined earlier, participants felt that there was a big gap with respect to career counseling facilities in Pakistan. No organization was currently working on it although it was seen by participants as one of the core issues of education sector. According to participants, career counseling would help them in many ways, including:

- Knowing the right route to embark on any career
- Discovering own area of interest
- Fully exploring career opportunities
- Developing personal skills
- Confidence building
- Achievement of future goals with desired job

iv. **Mode of Counseling:** The ideas suggested by participants for promoting career counseling facilities in Pakistan are as follows:

Media: Television is the most effective resource, because the new generation is more visually stimulated than interested in reading. Moreover at graduation and post-graduation level, there are many students who study privately and simultaneously work, therefore television or other audiovisual media was a convenient way of guidance as their physical presence was not required.

Seminars: Counseling presentations, discussions and sessions must be conducted in educational institutes (such as schools, colleges or universities) by experts in coordination with teachers and principal on regular basis.

Further, such workshops can be held in hotels or at the Karachi Expo center where students from all walks of life could attend.

Advertisements: Advertisements through print media or electronic media would also be supportive in promotion of such facilities.

Community: A common student community can be formulated across the country to enable students to share guidance and learning with each other.

Websites: A website can be developed specifically for students of Pakistan, where they can easily find a detailed insight and guidance about the respective careers.

v. **Strategies for Counseling:** Defining an absolute strategy after deciding upon a mode of counseling is essential for implementation. Hence the recommended strategies by participants were as follows:

vi. **Career Counselor:** Such sessions must be conducted by experts who have complete command and knowledge about their respective fields. They must be successful professionals who are working in senior level positions. Moreover, for inspiration, some newly qualified and successful candidates shall also lead such sessions with the senior expert.

Assessing Capabilities: It was felt that younger students could misjudge their own personalities. They may regard themselves as good, but the reality of the professional world may be the opposite. Thus a separate session must be arranged where students shall discover and understand their strengths, weaknesses, interests, behavior and attitude through discussion with experts. It will automatically help in short listing career choices.

Aptitude Test: This aptitude test shall be free of cost and its basic objective shall be to assess individual students' abilities in different subjects, such as Mathematics, English, and Science etc. Tests can also be designed for both men and women to assess their aptitude or interests with respect to jobs available in the employment industry.

vii. **Defining Complete package:** Below mentioned elements shall be specifically highlighted:

- Cost of professional studies
- Scholarships (if any)
- Time duration
- Reliable and registered educational institutes

Many students hesitate to join any professional studies because of expense and lengthy time duration, though they may be capable and talented. Sometimes students waste both their time and money by enrolling in unregistered colleges. Thus all these matters can be resolved by properly addressing them through career counseling.

Family Counseling: Family cooperation and concern is very important while deciding to choose a career (especially in rural areas of Pakistan). This is true particularly in case of women, where parents do not allow their daughters to choose all type of careers with respect to their specific cultural barriers. Therefore such arrangements shall be made where only parents must attend sessions for future betterment of their children regardless of sex. Otherwise, a community can be formed for parents to share concerns and be convinced.

Interest of Student: At times students are confused in discovering their basic interest area through which they can become future leaders. Most students listen to their friends or family members instead of identifying their own expertise in particular disciplines. Thus counselors can assist them in joining a career of their own liking.

Scope of Career: Counseling programs shall clearly define the scope of any career, such as:

- Future opportunities in the next 5 to 10 years
- Opportunities in local industry
- Opportunities in foreign countries
- Designation
- Monetary rewards and perks

There are certain other areas on which counselors can provide assistance to students:

- Identifying the client's basic motivation, for example to serve the community or to earn

monetary rewards.

- Matching personality with the type of career

viii. Counseling Messages: Participants believed that all the above defined strategies shall include the following key messages:

- Advantages and disadvantages of all careers
- Difficult phases during studies and in professional environments
- Profit motive in terms of handsome salaries
- Future growth
- Time duration
- Subjects

Career counseling programs, according to students, should also have special motivating messages, for women in particular, who leave their careers for marriage or family. Some examples of these are:

- “Your Future begins from here”
- “Where there is a will there is way”
- “Hard work is key to Success”
- “Choose the career where you can perform well”
- “Be determined for your passion”

ix. Beginning Age/ Level for Career Counseling: Participants across the region were of the opinion that such counseling sessions would be conducted from the seventh or eighth grade. The reason for this was that this was when a student decided either to choose science, arts or commerce. Moreover animations could be used for guidance at such a young age.

A few participants however expressed the opinion that school was too young an age to begin counseling as students were too immature to benefit from such facilities. Thus counseling would be more effective at the college level when one is finally deciding to opt a particular career for long term. Counseling provided during school years can then be evolved to a more advanced level in college.

x. “Careers” Need Special Counseling: Participants listed the following careers as ones where there was a great need for counseling in order to promote careers:

- Politics - completely ignored where young students desire to come and work for the betterment of country.
- Policy making – was much needed given the present condition of Pakistan
- Armed Forces – women must be made more aware of the opportunities they have in this field
- Microbiology – is a highly developed science in most countries
- Biotechnology - is a highly developed science in most countries

- Engineering – Must be promoted for women
- Physics – must be promoted for women
- Agriculture – is a viable career for those who are unable to pursue more intellectualized studies
- Police, Scouts – must have better and younger officials
- Government sectors – younger people must be involved
- Human Rights – younger people must be involved
- Sports – more women need to be encouraged
- Media – there is a dearth of professional counseling in this area despite vast interest from the youth
- Photography - there is a dearth of professional counseling in this area despite vast interest from the youth
- Education - there is a dearth of professional counseling in this area despite vast interest from the youth
- Sculpture – is a declining art and should be promoted through career counseling

Participants complained that all these disciplines lack counseling features. There was no common platform to collect relevant educational institutes at one place to give fruitful advices to students.

xi. Counseling Sessions from Gender Perspective: According to participants, in order to incorporate a gender perspective counseling sessions should specially emphasize the following areas with respect to females:

- Inspiring speeches which motivate females to continue their higher education and careers for balanced representation in every discipline
- Increase their confidence so that they can boldly demand their right to unbiased treatment, equal development opportunities, equal pay and protection from any sexual harassment at work places and in the society.
- Women should also be thoroughly and openly elaborated on constraints faced when working in certain environments with men, such as:
 - Mode of dress
 - Speech

Women participants held the belief that men should be counseled with respect to their behavior. They expressed the view that men’s career counseling should emphasize the importance of women as equals in the world of work.

Moreover both sexes should be uniformly counseled so that the economy produces balanced professionals or labors and none of them take superiority over the other.

xii. Career Orientation: All participants felt that most careers are dominated by males because Pakistani culture limits females from working. Nevertheless all the men participating agreed that females were more intelligent, sincere and hardworking, and stated that their family restrictions

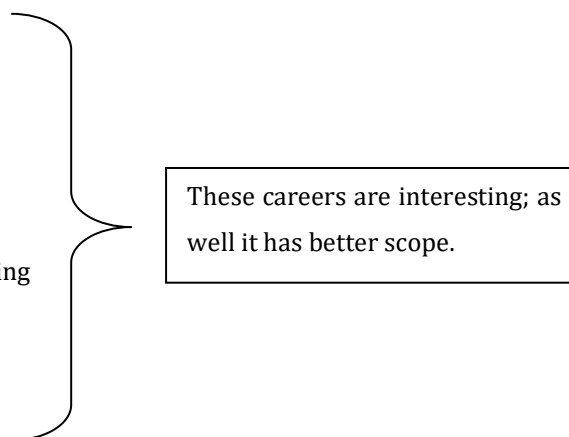
were a major obstacle leading to underutilization of their abilities. Owing to a strongly held religious and cultural belief that men were the breadwinners and women were the caregivers, there was a strongly held perception amongst participants that ‘Men are more careers oriented than women.’

xiii. **Commonly Chosen Careers:** Commonly selected careers by students are:

Engineering	Doctors	Teaching
Nursing	Journalism	IT
MBA	Fine Arts	Marketing

xiv. **Most Preferred Careers:** Careers preferred by participants of both sexes were

- Banking
- Show Biz
- Business
- Management
- Law
- Fashion Designing
- Sports
- Fine Arts
- Marketing



xv. **Disliked Careers:** Careers in which participants had no interest are:

- Acting/ Singing – perceived as disreputable occupations, specially for women
- Medicine – due to the immense amount of time needed that often leads to a loss of family and social life
- Police - was seen as disreputable due to the prevalence of bribery
- Nursing – women from Karachi emphasized their hesitation to embark on this route specially due to the recent rape of a nursing student at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre in Karachi
- Teaching – was seen as a profession only for those lacking ambition
- Chartered accountancy – was perceived to require the same sacrifices as medicine
- Mathematics – seen as an uninteresting area of study

xvi. **Limitation for Females:** Participants had earlier highlighted their perspective on women’s careers in Pakistan, i.e. that women are highly constrained due to familial and cultural pressures. This section highlights some detailed analysis provided by participants for their views. Participants felt that women’s employment in Pakistan was constrained by both, internal and external barriers:

Internal Barriers:	External Barriers:
Parental non-cooperation is a major obstacle for	Society’s attitude This was seen as a key reason

women who decide to work independently. This is true specially in Peshawar where women are not allowed any mobility. Most women in both regions were also seen as being restricted by parents prohibiting longer work hours or late sittings due to social norms, for fear of having their daughters' reputations tarnished. Further boys and girls within the same family are not equally treated.

Parents wish to spend more on sons' educations, but when it comes to daughters it is assumed that they will get married and hence money spent educating them was money wasted. For married women, familial responsibilities, children and conservative attitudes of the husband and in laws were seen as barring any motivation to work.

inhibiting women's career progression. The ill reputation and negative perception of working women, alongside harassment and slander faced by these women was seen as a considerable deterrent to women pursuing a career.

Men's advantages: Participants felt that men had the advantage over women in terms of being physically stronger, able to travel further and more frequently.

Organizational Barriers

Participants felt that organizations also hesitated to hire women due to their inability to stay late at the office, transportation problems in case of long commutes, and responsibility for women employees' security. Moreover, within the workplace, participants felt, that women were only given menial or routine tasks to complete and were also subject to harassment by male colleagues.

As a result of the abovementioned internal and external barriers, participants felt that women tend to rely on their families to choose their areas of study and future career path, if any.

c) Face To Face (In-depth) Interviews:¹⁵

A total of eight in-depth interviews were conducted to collect responses. The responses helped to explore the role of career counseling from an employer's perspective, current practices and standards of hiring, and employers' awareness available facilities with respect to career counseling in the country. Potential interviewees were screened through questionnaires before being asked to be interviewed. Each IDI ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in duration, a time period that allowed interviewers to build rapport with the interviewees and explore their in-depth feelings and perceptions of the topics being discussed. The benefit of the IDI lies in its ability to create an environment conducive to the open sharing of thoughts and feelings in a sample location that allows for the representation of any project's intended outreach and representation of key stakeholders. All the IDIs were conducted with HR managers and officials of different organizations, as follows:

International NGOs	Private National and Multinational organizations	Recruitment Agencies
02	05	01

d) Key Findings of IDIs

Career: Interviewees spontaneously associated a career with a long-term plan for twenty to twenty five years, depending on where a person would like to see him or herself in the future. The most commonly recalled careers during interviews were: medicine, chartered accountancy, piloting and business administration.

One interviewee distinguished between a career and a job, on the basis that the latter was a temporary activity meant to earn money whereas a career indicated a long-term achievement related to life goals and objectives for working within a particular function. However, it was also clarified that in the Pakistani context, the long-term goal of any career is usually survival, while most career decisions tend to be made thinking of the short-term picture.

Career by Choice or Force: Interviewees found that in Pakistani society the mixture of a particular society was dependent on a mixture of factors, that in combination deterred people from choosing careers according to their personal tastes and choice. A lack of awareness about new and multiple fields was one factor, since people tended to see their options as limited to the usual fields of commerce, computer sciences and engineering. Further, family support and aspirations presented obstacles to following individual preference. For example, parents often depend on children to fulfill their personal aspirations, without accounting for children's interests and abilities. Society itself also played a role in dictating people's career choices, through the prevalence of a social structure that forced young people to choose careers that were validated in their parents' eyes. Finally, people did not know the steps to follow to shape their future and were often content with jobs at reputed places that made them 'look good'. If anyone chose to follow individual choice, it was usually a move met with a lot of indirect resistance, making it difficult for people to choose careers of their own liking.

¹⁵ Annex 02 provides a list of individual IDI respondents.

Benefits of Choosing the Correct Career: The selection of the right career would result in a stable future for a longer period of time, according to interviewees. This would also mean that these individuals' abilities, strengths and weaknesses were optimally accounted for, making chances of success and growth high. Productivity would be higher.

Consequences of Choosing the Wrong Career: Interviewees felt that incorrect career choices made people stranded in the future, after wasting much time, money and effort. This was attributed to the eventual realization of such an individual that he or she is inappropriate for his or her chosen job. By this time however, prior decisions or familial obligations prevented a career change. The end result would thus be lowered productivity compared to other colleagues, as well as personal satisfaction.

Career Counseling: Career counseling was directly associated with coaching students on selection of career. It was seen as a face to face meeting where a counselor makes a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis of students' personality with respect to the discipline of interest. Moreover it was seen as a guidance tool to direct students toward higher growth and success which eases the decision making process of selection of right career.

CC was seen as highly important because once a person reach the right path benefits were not only limited to the individual; rather they spilled over to the family, organization and society level. One interviewee described career counseling as psychotherapy.

Role of Career Counseling in Achievements of Goals: It was felt that CC was very important for the accomplishment of future goals, because it prevented students from making erroneous judgments about themselves and their strengths and weaknesses. CC also helps guide an individual to achieving a position in higher management over time. Essentially, CC enabled individuals to shape the direction of their future, and improve the quality of their lives in terms of personal happiness.

Career Counseling Facilities in Pakistan: Respondents did not know of any reputed CC facilities in Pakistan, and only one respondent recalled the School of Leadership and Career Giant as two organizations providing some form of career counseling.

Students Interest in Attending Career Counseling Sessions: Interviewees felt that firstly students must be made aware of CC and the benefits which they can receive by attending such sessions. Some interviewees recommended that the seriousness of students' interests could be judged by charging a fee for attending these sessions.

Steps to Improve Career Counseling: The first step to improve CC in Pakistan was seen as an improvement in the education system itself. Interviewees stated the need for a strong basic educational system throughout the country, and recommended the following initiatives: Government shall play a positive role its encouragement

- Offer CC as a discipline of study in universities
- Universities and Institutes can have Alumni information sessions
- Recruitment agencies can also assist as they match qualifications with jobs.
- CC must involve the family as well as provide nonjudgmental guidance. For instance, a boy

wanting to pursue a career in hair dressing should not be discouraged by a career counselor because of any social perceptions of this career choice.

- CC must involve the family unit, so that an individual is guaranteed familial support in making a career choice. Following an initial session with family members, interviewees recommended that focus be shifted back to the individual to enable him or her to explore different passions and strengths, before making a career choice. Some messages interviewees recommended CC should carry are as follows: CC assists students in identifying the right career.
- CC Focuses on how to perform and achieve.
- CC involves two way communication Between counselor and client

Age for Initiating Counseling: Interviewees recommended that counseling should be initiated at the school level in order to reach the grass roots and help students identify their strengths early on. Schools could take steps to establish counseling centres and advertise such facilities.

Special Careers That Need Extra Counseling: No specific careers were highlighted by the interviewees, who believed that all the careers needed counseling where both parents and students could be either jointly or separately guided.

Career Counseling from Gender Perspective: According to interviewees, both sexes should be equally counseled and none of them shall be discriminated. However behavioral sessions should be conducted with women to guide them regarding social norms and limitations and ways of dealing with colleagues and bosses of the opposite sex.

Career Orientation within the Sexes: Interviewees considered both men and women to be career oriented, however they disclaimed that men were likely to be seen as more career oriented due to their breadwinning responsibilities. Further, due to a society dominated by men, parents believed that sons' higher education should be given more attention as they would have a family to support in the future, thus solidifying career orientation within men from an early age.

Females Marginalization: Interviewees felt that Pakistani cultural norms posed a barrier to women's career growth. They stated that women were normally preferred for back end positions. Some interviewees reiterated that due to a patriarchal society there is no equal participation of women in all the professions. However, they also claimed, there were also certain careers that could be pursued freely by women such as nursing and teaching because they were naturally suited to such jobs. On the other hand, they stated some careers could only be opted by males due to particular job requirements, such as construction work, requiring hard labour. Interviewees also claimed that the lack of education created an obstacle to women's career growth, while the social mindset further reinforced the lack of inclination for hiring women for jobs requiring late hours or manual labour. Thus cultural norms contributed to an unequal distribution of the sexes in the workforce.

Sectors Hiring Preferences

Women	Men
<p>According to interviewees, women were preferred in client servicing and creative sectors, since women were naturally polite, sober and have artistic minds. On this basis, interviewees listed the following fields where women's hiring was preferred:</p>	<p>The occupations listed below were seen as preferring men because the work involved was laborious, demanding in terms of time, and needed much travel. In addition to this, the fact that men were preferred for decision-making and top management positions was also accounted for in the jobs listed below:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching • Nursing • Human resources • Marketing • Tele sales • Doctors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking • Sales • Finance • Engineering • Supply Chain Management

Hiring Standards: While none of the interviewees shared their companies' hiring standards, they discussed the following common standards in the private sector:

- Qualification
- Intellect level
- Educational institute and previous background (IBA, LUMS)
- Observation of candidate strengths, confidence and extra ordinary skills (personality traits)
- Individual talents

Interviewees also stated that hiring women is currently encouraged in all private sector companies due to equal hiring policies for both sexes.

Participation in Counseling & Gender Training Sessions: None of the interviewees had ever participated in any counseling or gender sensitization sessions, however some had been part of skills development sessions within their organizations. All interviewees however, displayed eagerness to be a part of counseling or gender sensitizing sessions.

Benefits of Linkages between Career Counseling Facilities & Organizations: According to interviewees, linkages between career counseling facilities and organizations released the additional load upon students, counselors and the organizations. Further, while organizations did usually contact universities for recruitment, interviewees believed that career counseling would bridge the gap in resources by pre-emptively identifying and keeping a database of relevant candidates.

Conclusion: In totality, the above findings highlight the necessity for effective CC for the upcoming generation of graduates. It underscores the fact that the absence of such facilities leads to the wastage of time, money and individual talent. According to interviewees, beginning CC at an early stage, using the

most effective channels of counseling (e.g. recruitment agencies, electronic media, print media), having experts impart counseling involving the individual as well as his or her family, assessing individual students' capabilities and skills, and finally, providing a realistic view of the income and personal growth opportunities presented by specific careers, would lead to a concrete change in the world of work.

Part 3

CAPACITY BUILDING OF INSTITUTION

1. SELECTION OF INSTITUTIONS

While initially it had been decided to invite two universities to participate in the pilot project, during field research, this number was changed to three. In KP, the Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar, and the University of Peshawar, Peshawar was selected, while the University of Karachi, Karachi, was chosen from Sind. Institutions were chosen on the basis of the current absence of structured CC, and willingness and ability to incorporate lessons from capacity building to establish a CHOICES unit for CC. Details of the participating intuitions and key resource persons are as follows:



The **Institute of Management Sciences** (IM Sciences), Peshawar, was established in May 1995 with a view to imparting quality education and training in the field of business administration/management studies and allied disciplines. Since its inception, IM Sciences has successfully been pursuing its mission and now enjoys an outstanding position among the business schools of the country.

IM Sciences provides quality management education and new knowledge-based research that has established excellence at all levels. Through its focus on teaching and learning, research and outreach, the Institute creates, conveys and applies knowledge. Through this it aims to expand personal growth and opportunity, and advance social and community development in order to foster economic competitiveness and improve the quality of life. The opening of CHOICES expands the opportunities available to students and promises an even brighter future.

Nosheen Tabassum	Ambreen Jalil	Fareeha Parvez Toru
<p>Nosheen Tabassum has been an above average student throughout her academic career. She has excellent planning/organizing and writing skills, and is an innovative change agent. While working with the HRDN project as Mentoring Officer, Ms. Tabassum secured 235 hiring commitments from</p>	<p>Ambreen Jalil has done Masters in Business Administration in 2007 from Institute of Management Sciences.</p> <p>At present she is serving at Human Resource Development Centre, at IM/Sciences Peshawar as an Office Manager and Assistant</p>	<p>Fareeha Toru was awarded degree of Masters in Business Administration in 2008 from Institute of Management Sciences; Peshawar.</p> <p>Leveraging 7 years of working experience, at present I am working at Human Resource Development Center, Peshawar, funded by AUSAID</p>

employers in Peshawar within a short span of two months.

She has also successfully established maintained and updated the “Gender Resource Center” and is a writer and member of the editorial board of Khwendo Kor’s (KK) newsletter on “Raising Awareness of the Girl’s Education”. Ms. Tabassum is a dynamic individual and is excited to bring her commitment and skills to her work as a CHOICES officer.

Manager for Career Development Centre USAID Project. She also worked with Peshawar Business School as a Manager HR and Lecturer. She served a Software Project File Transfer and User Authentication (FTUA).

She is very keen in getting different work experiences and to serve as a lead expert resource for strategic business initiatives, workforce development and analytics, human resource management, workplace best practices, organizational enhancement, project management, performance measurement, government relations, communications and other organizational consulting functions.

Education Development, as a Trainer for IELTS. She is also serving as Manager at Office of Development and Advancement; She was the technical member of Human Resource Development Center, IMS.

She is a professional member with DFID-IT Trainings for government employees, USAID-PC-1. She also attended the trainings on government employees, UNDP- local government representatives, British Council-English language trainings for local counselors, USAID-Financial Aid and Development and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan-Financial Aid and Development.



The **Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies at the University of Karachi** was set up in 1989 by the Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan. The purpose of this academic discipline is to help ensure the integration of women into the mainstream of development. This object would be achieved through Women's Studies multidisciplinary programmes.

Creating awareness and generating a debate on women's issues with a view to influencing policy-planners, the educated public and women's pressure groups. Critically examining existing theories, models and methodologies and modifying them for an integrated development of women in Pakistan. Introducing and promoting the discipline of women's studies at College and University level.

Formulating curricula at University, College and high school level with a view of incorporating knowledge on women's issues, gender gaps in urban and rural development. Documenting women's contributions in various fields of learning and activity.

Shagufta Nasreen	Faisal Hashmi	Mohammad Nadeem-ullah
<p>Shagufta Nasreen is an enthusiastic teacher of Women's Studies Centre. She is always very keen to learn new ideas and transfer it to her students. She has excellent rapport with students and has been student advisor for the last four years.</p> <p>She is part of the editorial team of Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies and supervised researches of students. She is aggressively involved in career development activities and providing guidance and support to students in their life, education and career planning.</p>	<p>Faisal Hashmi is working as research associate and is passionate to improve his skills and knowledge related to his field. CHOICES would provide him an opportunity to tap his abilities and use them skillfully. He is good listener and learner. He has quality of making linkages with other relevant departments.</p>	<p>Muhammad Nadeem-ullah is hard working teacher of social work department. He has been part of many researches conducted about women and gender issues. Therefore he has good communication skills especially with women. His PhD research topic is about Home based women workers of Karachi city in which he interviewed home based women workers and analyzed their socio economic conditions.</p> <p>As a teacher he is very close to students and this is the reason he is interested to be part of CHOICES so that he can polish his skills and guide students in choosing their careers.</p>



University of Peshawar was established on 30th October, 1950. **The Department of Psychology** came into existence in 1964.

The Department presently offers specialization in Social Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Psychological Testing, Counseling, Developmental Psychology, and Experimental Psychology. The Department is equipped with a Library, Laboratory for experimentation, a Computer section, and a Mass Communication laboratory. It also offers an afternoon Master of Sciences Programme and a four-year integrated Bachelor of Science Programme. Programmes for a Diploma in Clinical Psychology and Industrial/Organizational Psychology are soon to be launched alongside some certificate courses. The Department also publishes a research journal *Khyber Behavioral Studies*.

Uzma Gillani	Nawal Haider Shuaib
<p>Recently appointed Assistant Professor. Previously, Uzma worked as a clinical psychologist in Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar, as a Research Assistant at the Simon Fraser Univ. Canada, and as a Lecturer in Frontier Women Univ. in Psychology. She is a dedicated, honest and competent teacher and researcher.</p>	<p>Contract lecturer employed at the University for five years. She has been teaching counseling and personality theories to MSc. students. Guiding students towards right choices and careers considering their skills, knowledge and attitude is her passion. She will be a part of career development planning department in the future.</p>

Sumbal Gillani	Rabia Fayyaz
<p>Student in the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (PDCP) Programme. She has been a very good student and a dedicated worker. She has a passion to help and promote student and guide them in their future goal. She is also voluntarily involved in developing linkages of students with relevant departments, teachers and mentors to pursue their career.</p>	<p>Student in the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (PDCP) Programme. She has been a very inquisitive and polished student of the department. Rabia is a very active and available for help to both teacher and students. She has good communication skills and also guides students regarding their career approach. She wishes to pursue a future in career counseling.</p>

2. MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

Based on desk review, findings of rapid research, visit to institutions, meeting with officials of similar nature projects and an extensive review of international practices a four day training curriculum¹⁶ was developed. The following areas were included in the material to cover all possible perspectives for establishing CHOICES.

1	<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background • Career Counseling in Pakistan • Status of Career Counseling for Girls/Women in Pakistan • Status of Career Counseling for Girls/Women in Pakistan • Objectives • Proposed Agenda • Participating Intuitions 	2	<p>The Spheres of Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Spheres of Life • Activity 1 - My Three Spheres of Life • Activity 2 • Activity 3 • Activity 4 • Activity 5 • Activity 6
3	<p>The Career Development Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Career Development Process • Activity 2 - The Class Reunion • Activity 3 - Patterns From My Life Story • Patterns from My Life Story • Activity 4 - What Matters Most to Me? • Current Influences in My Life • Observations • Career Planning Summary • No Guarantees • Career framework • Checklist • Career development cycle 	4	<p>Concept of Career Counseling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of Career Counseling • Specific Challenges in Pakistan • How can these challenges be addressed? • How CHOICES can address women's recruitment issues • CHOICES Strategies • Ways of promoting progressive policies/legislations at workplaces through involving employers • Current Job trends for Women in the Workplace • The Role of Counselor • Developing Effective Career Counseling Tools for CHOICES • Career Counseling in the Context of Gender and Sexual Orientation • Career Counseling • Career Development Guidelines • Role of CHOICES Staff in Linkage Building
5	<p>Establishing CHOICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing CHOICES • Spectrum of CHOICES • People, Tools and Process <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resources 2. Format 3. Facilities 4. Personnel 5. Links with the community 6. Work experience • Sustainability • Steps to Establishing a Career Development Center (CHOICES) • TIPS for Starting CHOICES • Strategic Planning 	6	<p>How does CHOICES work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does CHOICES work? • Implications and Limitations • Closing advice • W11FM
7	<p>Annexes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database • Gender Reference Notes • Strategic Planning Exercise (SAMPLE) • Monthly Progress Report Format for Career Centers • Student Job Fair Evaluation Form • Choices Visit Form • Retrenched Worker Services Survey • Self Assessment Exercise • Self Evaluation of Work Values Rating • Skills/ Talent Inventory • Working with People • CHOICES Services Survey • Student Workshop Evaluation Form • Initial Employer Meeting Report 	8	<p>Resource Pack</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning the Job Search • Anees Husaini's Way - A comprehensive guide of institutions in Pakistan,

¹⁶ A complete set of participant's handbook is attached for ready reference.

It was expected that an international career-counseling expert would be invited to conduct a career counseling session with training participants but due to the following reasons, a local gender expert conducted the session:

- a) The material collected from USAID Job Project was developed by an international resource person. Permission was obtained from respective authorities to for the use of material. It was also observed that the material developed by the international resource used a generic approach while the objectives of the training required an approach that emphasized women's employment and placement more significantly.
- b) The material that was developed and related resource material was synchronized with local and culture and needs.
- c) The literature review had revealed the efficacy of multicultural counseling techniques and the inherent need for CC to account for cultural factors. Exploring cultural diversity and family influence allows for a deeper appreciation of the uniqueness of all clients and the cultures they came from and are now part of. Being aware of differential pressures on people and their responses add to the essential knowledge and awareness that all career counselors need to become increasingly culturally competent. The local resource person had more knowledge and experience with cultural issues and barriers surrounding women's employment, and the psyche of target beneficiaries and their families towards women's employment in both rural and urban areas of Pakistan. Thus it was preferred that he conduct the session.

3. CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

A four day training workshop was held in Islamabad where 10 participants (8 women, 2 men) attended the workshop¹⁷. The four days were divided in four categories¹⁸ as per the following:

Conceptual Understanding of Career Counseling	Gender and Women Status in Pakistan
<p>This phase of the workshop was intended to boost the counseling skills of participants, helping them assess their aptitude for the task. Participants were taken through exercises and information sessions aimed at giving them an understanding of counseling itself, its key clients, when counseling is required, and what kind of facilities and situations counseling should be provided in.</p>	<p>In this segment, the focus was on helping participants understand the gender realities faced by women in Pakistan. The questions the segment aimed to answer were:</p> <p>What are the barriers and constraints faced by women in Pakistan?</p> <p>Why women are not highly and equally represented in the labour force in Pakistan?</p> <p>What are the stereotypes surrounding women?</p> <p>What are women’s own perceptions about employment?</p>
Action Planning and Establishing CHOICES	Exposure Visit
<p>During this phase a checklist of documentation and activities to be conducted by the CHOICES units established after the training. This segment aimed to build the participants’ abilities for practical application of counseling techniques and the establishment of a CC unit (CHOICES).</p>	<p>The HRDN and the ASL Foundation were visited to expose participants to their modes of preparing women for employment and their success rate for women’s placement, and techniques for sustainability and the demand and supply mechanisms involved.</p>





¹⁷ A list of participants and their contact information is available in Annex 03

¹⁸ A four day workshop agenda is available in Annex 04

4. KEY CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

a) Career Counseling for CHOICES

Participants were taken through the fundamentals of CC as it has been outlined earlier in this report, and were given guidelines on how best to aid the career development process. The key points covered in this area were as follows:

-  Counselors must see career development as an *ongoing process*, where it is a counselor's primary responsibility to develop clients.
-  Counseling must employ a two-way approach, whereby counselors and clients must work together to *agree* on the goals of the CC process. Counselors must provide a supportive atmosphere and motivational environment for the client to grow.
-  Counselors must enable their client to understand the value of and the need for *personal growth*, and the need for clients to change in order to achieve their objectives. Counselors therefore must also determine, with the client, what *areas* this change is required in. These range from a change in academic or professional performance to a change in the field of study or work situation.
-  Counselors must be personally committed to their client's growth, and keep them informed of their performance or changed behavior through consistent and candid feedback.

To further clarify the role of counselors as well as other staff to be involved in the CHOICES unit, the workshop also contained a segment that explained the role of each staff member, from administrative to counseling, in promoting career development. Details of these roles can be found in the CHOICES Manual attached with this report. The role of CHOICES staff in building linkages with employers, maintaining relationships with students, utilizing on campus sites for activities, and building awareness of the importance of career counseling within the student body were the main areas covered, as well as the importance of managing CHOICES financial sustainability.

b) The Aim of the Workshop

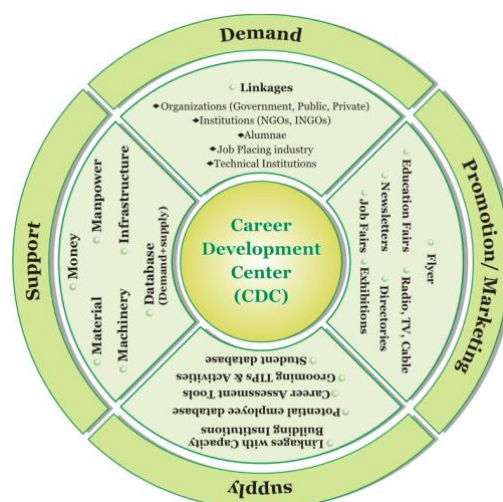
This section outlines the way that the CHOICES unit, the expected outcome of the workshop and the core focus of the project, was conceptualized and presented to the training participants. The concept of CHOICES was developed based on the rapid research feedback from FGD participants and interviewees, and gap identification through the desk review and field research.

What is CHOICES?: To fulfill the need for resources and services that assist individuals, both men and women, of any age, at any point in their lives, to explore academic, career and training options, a CC unit titled CHOICES was developed. Keeping in consideration the lack of guidance, resources and structured inclusion of culturally localized women's issues, a CHOICES unit was conceptualized to fill this gap. CHOICES is meant to enable the empowerment of men and women to develop and implement career plans best suited to their individual situations, skills and preferences, that would help them achieve academic and professional goals.

Why are CHOICES necessary? The need for a unit like CHOICES was clearly highlighted in all the primary and secondary research conducted in the course of this project. CHOICES are necessary to address the need for information and resources prevalent in the potential employees of today. CHOICES are meant to help individuals align their interests, competencies and values with available educational, training and employment opportunities. CHOICES will present information on labor market trends, educational and employment opportunities in a systematic way so that individuals can make informed choices about their course of study and career plans. This process defines the connection between education, training and workforce development.

How to Establish CHOICES? The success of CHOICES depends on the input from the supervisors and other staff on the ground. It is to be seen whether the capacity building session preceding the establishment of CHOICES will have the desired impact. The capacity building workshop provided key stakeholders with specific forms for documentation, other informational resources, as well as skill development and activities that would enable them to implement the action planning checklist also devised at the conclusion of the workshop. The aim of training key resource persons was based on the understanding that developing them would in turn enable them to develop the staff engaged at CHOICES.

Spectrum of CHOICES: Practicalities taken into consideration when finalizing the concept of the CHOICES unit included the people who might work there, the tools and resources that can be made available to students, and the process or method of career counseling. It was taken into consideration that the unit itself must be promoted to its target beneficiaries, i.e. the students and professionals at the selected institutions. Thus, a range of promotional material was also developed and given to the training participants.



CHOICES also accounted for the fact that in order to assist students with career concerns, it is helpful to have various research tools available as well as individuals with specialized training who are familiar with the process of career counseling. Through the capacity building session, resource persons were given specialized gender-sensitive career counseling training. The means of financial sustainability, documentation, procuring equipment, building linkages with employers, NGOs, alumni and technical institutions were also imparted to participants during the workshop.

Details of the people, resources and tools covered in the capacity building session follow in the next section.

How CHOICES can Address Women's Recruitment Issues: The following are some specific activities that CHOICES can undertake to address women's recruitment and retention issues:

Targeting Women	Build Capacity
Directly target women as the primary beneficiaries by identifying their current reproductive and productive roles and build upon these by increasing the economic value of these activities.	Develop and plan programs with employers and women workers in capacity development and trainings for job placements and retention Capacity development programs for women workers with sessions on confidence building, professional growth and workplace ethics.
Conduct Gender Analysis	Advocate Gender Agenda
Undertake gender analysis of men and women's labor force profile, labor conditions as well as differences in their experiences of seeking, qualifying, retaining and advancing in employment.	Advocate for gender sensitive HR policies that provide developing job descriptions, promotion opportunities with experience, pay increases and rewards.

5. EXPOSURE VISIT

The purpose of the exposure visits were to provide participants with insight into the practical application of organizational skills taught during the training. They were meant to expose participants to the learning and experiences of actors already involved in the area of career development.

The core objectives of the exposure visit were as follows:

1. To facilitate an understanding of the standards of career counseling as a project and as an individual initiative,
2. To provide insight into how such initiatives can be sustained if started in their own institutions,
3. To highlight the strengths and limitations of the existing initiatives, including the type of resources these initiatives used for smooth implementation of their programs, and;
4. Help participants network to establish what material or mentoring support in can be received from these institutions.

The following two institutions had been pre-selected for the purpose of exposure visits on the basis of two different dimensions:

HRDN	ASK Foundation
An institute that is exclusively involved in women's employment through capacity enhancement and placement services.	A career development centre offering recruitment and placement services alongside career counseling, to both men and women.

Proceedings of the visits:

During both visits, participants were taken around the premises and shown the resources used. They were also provided with an informative and interactive presentation or information session.

HRDN	ASK Foundation
<p>The visit was very productive in terms of understanding how and what areas to train women in prior to their placement in the industry. The HRDN staff were very knowledgeable as regards the key competencies required by the employers for women.</p> <p>A comprehensive presentation was used to convey insightful knowledge as to how women</p>	<p>The visit to ASK Foundation was more beneficial for participants in terms of understanding the management and sustainability of a career development center.</p> <p>However, while the presentation of the Foundation's achievements were very impressive, gender did not appear to be a formally incorporated concern in the initiative's activities. For example, men were placed</p>

<p>were trained in these competency areas. The presentation also emphasized that as per the HRDN mandate, placement of women per se was not the key focus of the staff, rather it was capacity building to promote placement. In keeping with this, HRDN staff had more trainers and focused more on capacity enhancement.</p> <p>HRDN staff explained that this initiative was project based and there were no plans for replication. Moreover, because of the project-based structure, there was no element of entrepreneurship as financial self-sustainability did not need attention.</p>	<p>instead of women, compromising the target for women's placement, women tended to be recruited for jobs that were traditionally female, and there was no advocacy or counseling for women to find jobs suited to their skills and interests rather than societal expectations. Moreover, the presentation made it clear that men also suffered due to the lack of individualized counseling that led to a mismatch in interests and jobs.</p> <p>When questioned by participants about the dearth of proper counseling, ASK staff responded that they could not provide quality counseling due to pressure to meet the given placement targets by the project. This caused more emphasis on immediate placement rather than investing time and resources in counseling.</p> <p>It was also learnt what the constraints are from employer perspective for hiring women for specific jobs such as senior management which require excessive social networking, field-related jobs which require traveling and staying overnight, jobs that require late hours or night shifts. The hijab and pardah was another factor which was sometime a barrier from women's own perspective as they exaggerated its restrictions which resulted in losing a job.</p> <p>The overall initiative however was impressive, as participants learnt how good practices related to sustainability could be replicated in their own setup.</p>
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Key Findings of the Exposure

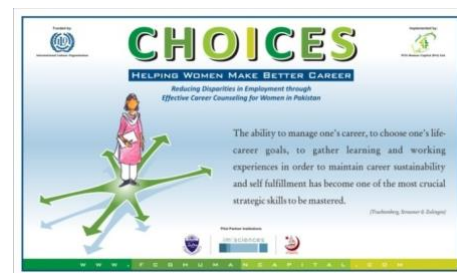
- Focus was on placement not career development through counseling and informed choices.
- The career counselors where present (ASK Foundation) were trained in coaching men and women for placement and employment interviews but not in career counseling as a cultural and psychologically structured tool.
- The gender balance was compromised by the implementing and funding agencies to achieve the target numbers for placement.
- Conceptual clarity on gender, employment and career were missing.
- There was no awareness of the positive change that these initiatives could bring about in terms of contributing to the national and international agenda by promoting women's work.
- The environment (both internal and external), especially in the case of women, was not considered during placement, which resulted in low retention in job placement.

6. ACTION PLANNING¹⁹

Prior to the exposure visit, an action planning exercise was conducted with workshop participants. The purpose of this was to allow them to put their learning's into perspective and chalk out a plan for operationalization. The subsequent exposure field visits were then meant to augment participants' understanding of the key practical skills and activities they needed to implement for the establishment of CHOICES. The action planning checklist developed at the end of this exercise will also serve as a monitoring mechanism, discussed under Monitoring and Evaluation.

Core components of the Action Planning checklist are listed below:

- Development of calendar
- Short sessions for women through the HRDN WEE courses
- Development of training material
- Collection of case studies
- Databases of recruiting websites
- Using different mediums for advocacy, awareness and promotion
- Working toward the development of a CAP (Counseling Association of Pakistan)
- Gaining exposure to local and internationally-based counselors
- Securing student memberships for the CHOICES unit
- Arranging short skill development sessions for key resource persons at CHOICES



¹⁹The Action Planning Form is attached as Annex 05. Completed Action Planning Checklists are Annexes07, 08 & 09

7. PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

a) Participants expressed the following as their key takeaways from the training in terms of lessons learned:²⁰

- The importance of CC
- Ability to assess aptitude
- Basic skills for counseling
- Understanding of gender and strategy to incorporate gender in counseling
 - Clarity on basic concepts of gender sensitive CC
 - Using psychology and management to empower women through counseling
 - Understanding of the current context and situation of women in the world of work: the lack of gender sensitivity, cultural barriers to women's equal labour force participation
 - Including family in the counseling process for more effective results
- Conceptual clarity derived from exposure visits that helped understand the practical application of concepts taught
- The importance of building linkages with industry
- Insight into the potential challenges of establishing a CHOICES unit

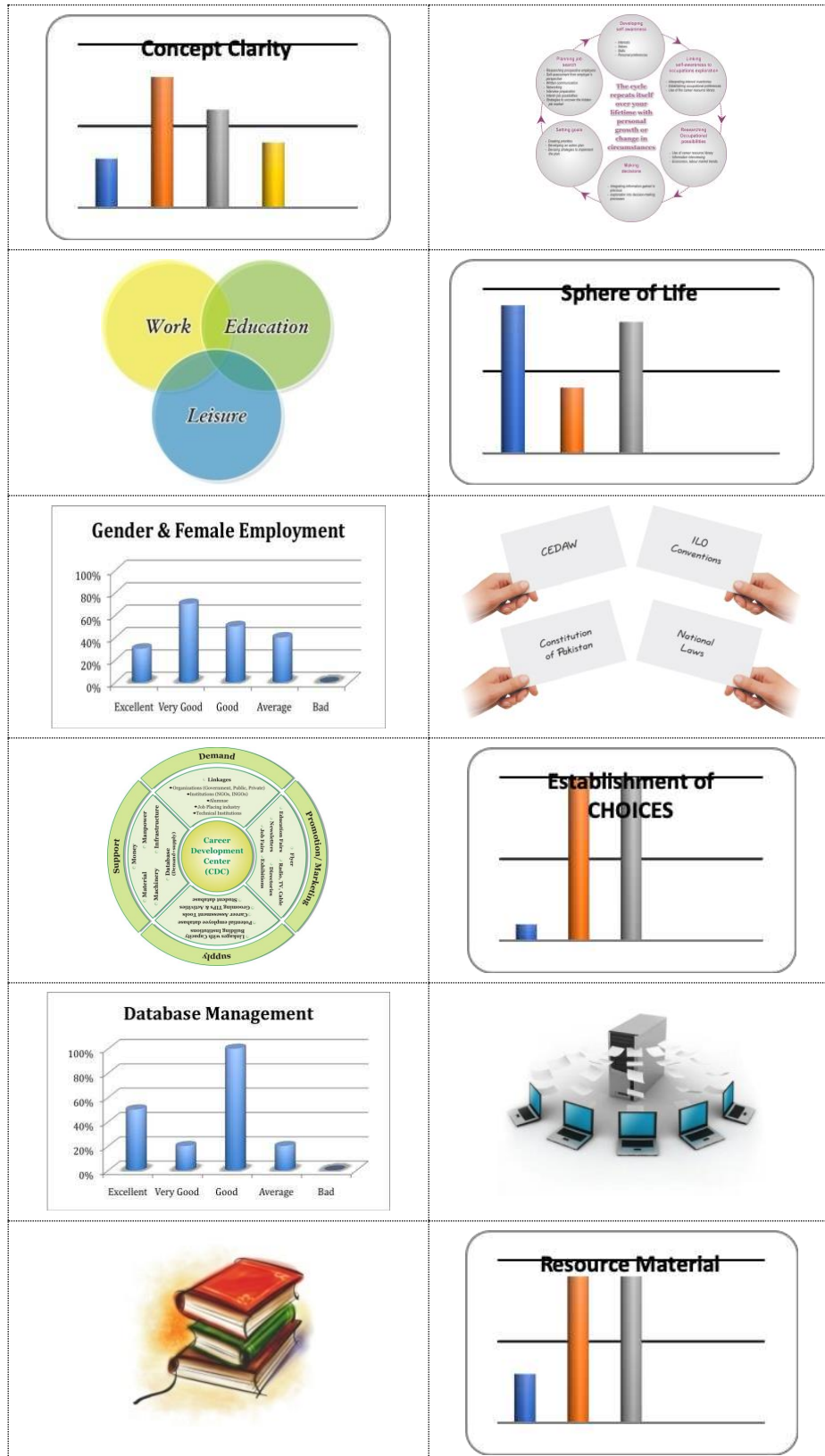
b) Participants also provided the following recommendations for subsequent capacity building sessions in gender sensitive CC:

- Mentoring by professional counselors
- More exercises applying concepts taught
- More group work
- Involvement of women already working as career counselors
- The ethics of career counseling
- How to sustain linkages in industry
- More activity based learning regarding gender issues
- More than one trainer, to allow for more learning through interpersonal sharing
- Different ideas and approaches to building databases

²⁰ Participants' feedback has been gathered from workshop evaluation forms. A sample form is attached in annexure 06

c) Participants' learning ratings for specific areas of training:

The following tables provide a charted numerical representation of how participants rated the different areas covered by the training.



d) Participant Feedback about the Facilitator

The following tables provide an overview of participants' ratings of the trainer's skills:

e) Overview of Training:

On the whole, participants expressed the view during feedback that the workshop was a good learning experience. They felt that the learning value of the workshop was added to by the presence of individuals from three disciplines: management, gender and psychology, and the interactive nature of the sessions enabled them to share their areas of study with each other. Participants also felt that the workshop had been an effective way of helping them understand new dimensions of gender sensitive issues and current job placement situations.

Participants felt that the training was very useful for them in terms of understanding CC and its importance, the role of gender in CC, and the means for establishing a career development centre, i.e. CHOICES. Particularly, participants felt they had emerged from the training with a completely new outlook on the challenges faced by women in the professional arena, and had developed a deeper and better understanding of the cultural constraints placed by gender roles on women seeking career development.

The roll-out of career counselling and its techniques, concepts and purposes was seen positively by the participants, who felt they had learnt more about how specialized career counselling is, and what it actually entails. The most useful topics were the basic counselling skills and tips for incorporating gender into the counselling process.

The composition of the training group itself was appreciated by many participants, who felt that, the mixture of their areas of expertise: management, psychology and women's studies, added to the value of the training sessions. Highlighting the energy and motivation of the trainer, Mr. Shahzad Bukhari, which allowed an energetic and interactive experience, they also stated that they were able to share information with each other and had thus developed a better understanding of how gender, management and psychology contribute to the career counselling process.

Training participants were of the opinion that the exposure visits had provided them with essential insights into the practical application of the concepts learned, and they felt more ready to apply these concepts on their own to establish CHOICES in their respective institutions.

One of the key lessons the participants emphasized was an understanding of gender and strategy to incorporate gender in counselling. They pinpointed the following areas to have been well explicated through the workshop:

"The gender issue was highlighted in a positive way."

"The trainer was highly motivated."

"The training was very informative, and more trainings of this nature are needed."

"A job well done with some room for improvement."

"As we got to interact with individuals from different fields and shared our knowledge, we learnt how to apply each other's techniques to bring a change in women's' [sic] career scene of the country."

- Clarity on basic concepts of gender sensitive CC
- Using psychology and management to empower women through counselling
- Understanding of the current context and situation of women in the world of work: the lack of gender sensitivity, cultural barriers to women's equal labour force participation
- Including family in the counselling process for more effective results
- Participants left the training feeling motivated and empowered to begin the process of bringing about a change in women's employment and the individual satisfaction and productivity of both men and women, through CHOICES.
- On the downside, many participants also expressed the view that the training was more theoretical than activity-based in nature. Other recommendations for subsequent similar capacity building sessions included:
 - Mentoring by professional counsellors
 - More group work
 - Involvement of women already working as career counsellors
 - The ethics of career counselling
 - How to sustain linkages in industry
 - More than one trainer, to allow for more learning through interpersonal sharing
 - Different ideas and approaches to building databases

f) Monitoring and Evaluation of Choices

The training evaluation has established that the capacity building session was effective in imparting key skills and concepts to participants. However, the expected outcome of the capacity building session, i.e. the CHOICES units that are to be established at participating institutions, need longer-term monitoring than the project timeline allows. In order to implement informal monitoring and evaluation of CHOICES after the pilot closes (February 15th 2011) email contact will be initiated with resource persons and stakeholders at these institutions. The action planning checklist will be used as a yardstick to evaluate the efficiency of participating institutions in implementing CHOICES. The findings of this informal monitoring will then be compiled into a project brief. This report of the progress of the CHOICES units in the three participating institutions, including any operational obstacles or problems, will then be submitted to the ILO complementarily, for its consideration.

KEY LEARNINGS

1. The desk review, primary research and rapid research reinforced the basic rationale for the CHOICES project: that there is a massive dearth of career counseling practices in Pakistan. Further, the concept of career counseling in and of itself is not properly understood to cover individual preferences and talents, which is essential for any form of career counseling to have an impact on optimal employment and productivity. Instead, career counseling as it exists today, is focused on placement matched with qualification. There is little or no understanding or structured focus on individual assessment of aptitudes and preferences prior to the selection of an area of study leading to a particular career path.
2. Societal attitudes represent the most mammoth hurdle to overcome if the outcomes of career counseling for women are to be achieved. The need for widespread attitudinal change at the grassroots level is dire, if women are ever to enjoy nondiscriminatory, free and equal access to opportunities for education and employment in Pakistan. However, men also face constraints in terms of cultural pressure as breadwinners, and access to quality education leading to rewarding placement. Thus, while career counseling involving families and peers is undeniably important for women's economic empowerment, it is also just as important for men, since both sexes are afflicted in the same way by different cultural expectations and infrastructural deficiencies.
3. IDIs revealed a preference for hiring graduates from private institutions such as IBA and LUMS. Thus, on a broader scale, the quality of education being imparted as well as the initiatives for skill building at institutions must be enhanced to make their graduates able to compete on par with other graduates.
4. Universities as well as primary and secondary educational institutions in Pakistan lack a comprehensive understanding of career counseling for their students, and its importance for their academic as well as later professional success. The cultural and societal role in students' selection of areas of study, internships and areas of study is by and large ignored by educational institutions. This is a serious problem, since education is at the core of successful career development.
5. Developed countries enjoy greater equality for both sexes in the world of work because of the way that career counseling is institutionalized and has been developed as a science in its own right. The existence of professional associations to promote and keep refining career counseling, based on career development theories and changes in the external environment can definitely be assumed to have played an instrumental role in achieving greater levels of economic productivity as well as personal growth.
6. The long-term picture is largely neglected by students and their parents, mentors, informal advisors, teachers and older peers when providing career advice. This has an adverse effect on the progress of any concrete and sustainable socioeconomic change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Replication

The research done during the project as well as the response to the capacity building session both validate the importance of having proper and structured career counseling facilities at the school- and college-level, for both, men and women. It is thus highly recommended that this project be replicated keeping in mind the considerations listed below:

1. The establishment of a CHOICES unit is an outcome of the project that needs more long-term monitoring of efficacy and obstacles so that more detailed recommendations for replication can be developed. Moreover, the institutions covered were based in urban Sind and rural and urban KPK. It is thus recommended that alongside the duration of the project, the number of participating institutions (with reference to their geographic location and urban or rural context) be increased in any future replication. This will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the differences in the ground realities of career counseling between urban and rural areas. Moreover, specific targets should be set in terms of placement, beneficiaries, information sessions, and job fairs and so on to allow for more structured monitoring.
2. The importance of career counseling for men and women must be highlighted on a broader scale to all educational institutions, from the primary level to the postgraduate level. These institutions must be brought to realize the importance of career counseling to their students' academic achievements and later professional and personal growth. This can be done through information sessions that are contextualized according to the level of schooling or education, and the demographic context of each institution, as far as possible.
3. In order to address the strong cultural setback to independent career choices and development, it is recommended that micro-level community- or Mohalla-based initiatives be undertaken with the purpose of increasing parental and societal awareness. The issue being advocated should be the importance of letting girls and boys or men and women make informed career choices that are guided by their individual skills, interests and aptitudes. This will undoubtedly boost the effectiveness of career counselors in enabling their clients to make freer career choices by engaging parents/families in attitudinal change.
4. To assist future participants in better understanding the means to effecting attitudinal change, it is recommended that in subsequent replication, a local psychologist or psychotherapist who has had experience of career counseling be invited as a resource person.
5. Employers must be more involved in any subsequent replication of the project. The dearth of career counseling and gender sensitivity at the organizational level must also be addressed in order to achieve the overarching ILO objective of increased productivity and personal satisfaction in the world of work for both men and women. One way of doing this is to approach the private sector to incorporate them more directly into discussions with both their potential employees as well as with faculty and institutional management to allow for greater streamlining between educational and

training curricula and two way communication of needs to the hiring bodies.

6. Any subsequent replication of the project must provide enough time before implementation to allow for the development of Standard Operating Procedures as regards documentation, and the establishment of a central, web-based source point. This central source will allow real-time monitoring and evaluation alongside feedback/reporting, and the cost effective sharing of standard templates, checklists, and databases. In addition to this, the time will also allow for a more comprehensive team to be taken on board and tasks such as staff training, planning and networking can be done more effectively.
7. The selection of participants in any subsequent replication must include individuals who are currently working in structured and formal career counseling departments. The enthusiastic sharing of learning in the pilot project workshop indicates that this would be a good way of adding to the understanding of career development services for participants not formally involved in career development departments. Moreover, the participants' evaluation of the training reinforces this recommendation.
8. For greater efficacy, it is recommended that participants in the subsequent replication of this project be made to begin informal counseling before actual project implementation begins. This is likely to better the participants' understanding of the practical application of the skills and knowledge acquired through the formalized training.
9. There is a huge need to have mass promotion for this project prior to inviting or selecting institutions through print and electronic media. Employers, students, academia and parents must be made aware through seminars workshops and press conferences. Finally, a media launch along with the project implementation can help the CHOICES field staff establish greater credibility in procuring placements for their clients.

Success Boosters

As additional factors that could boost the efficacy of CCCs, the following measures are suggested:

1. The research has revealed 15 CDCs existing under the aegis of the USAID Jobs Project, as well as assorted other career development initiatives such as the HRDN's WEE and the ASK Foundation. To make more efficient use of the time and resources already invested in these initiatives, it is recommended to work with them in the area of gender and counseling. In this regard, a similarly structured workshop can be conducted for the staff at these centers. This would boost their effectiveness while simultaneously ensuring greater prevalence of gender concerns in career counseling.
2. An annual award "The Most Gender Sensitive Organization" can be introduced with an association with the ILO. Organizations can be registered to participate by sending their nominations and awards will be awarded based on a Gender Equity checklist. The checklist could have gender policies and

guidelines, gender balanced employment, implementation of a sexual harassment policy, and so on. Organizations would be interested in such an award as it would boost their corporate image.

3. A review of CCC can also be held on annual basis and best center can be awarded a shield based on their performance. Performance criteria can be developed keeping various indicators including women presence in economic domain (number of female hired on their desired job, relevant job), change in women status and position (senior position, non-traditional job, women role in decision making jobs), etc.
4. The extremely significant influence and pervasiveness of the internet can be utilized for the purposes of career counseling. For instance, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation discovered that women make up a majority of the rising numbers of students enrolling in distance learning programs: sixty percent of the online learners were women over 25 years of age. This presents an opportunity specially for women living in social environments that are cloistered and do not allow any mobility, to create a cutting edge for themselves in terms of education through the internet. At the same time, more career options in terms of working from home can be developed for these women.
5. All career counseling centers can also be organized under “Counseling Association of Pakistan” which can be registered as a forum. This forum would be expected to provide capacity building, linkage building and revenue generating opportunities for CAP, its partner institutions and their members.

ANNEXES

DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS UNEMPLOYED BUT COMPLETED THEIR GRADUATION/ POST GRADUATION

Names	Gender	Age groups	Education	Educational Institute	Region
Farwa	Female	22	BSC	Frontier College	Peshawar
Sitwat Batool	Female	24	MA	Peshawar University	Peshawar
Salat Zehra	Female	24	BA	Jinnah Inter Degree College	Peshawar
Sobia	Female	24	MA in Sociology	Peshawar University	Peshawar
Aleena	Female	23	BBA	Peshawar University	Peshawar
Ome- Laila	Female	22	BSC	Agriculture University Peshawar	Peshawar
Sabee Naan	Male	24	BBA in Marketing	Urdu University	Karachi
Shaheer	Male	22	BBA in Finance	Preston University	Karachi
Shahrukh	Male	22	BCOM	Indus	Karachi
Karachi Owais	Male	22	Engineering	NED University	Karachi
Danyal	Male	23	BE in Civil	Sir Syed University	Karachi
Afan	Male	22	ACCA	Tabani's School of Accountancy	Karachi
Obaid ulaah	Male	22	BBA in Marketing		Karachi

DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS UNEMPLOYED BUT COMPLETED THEIR GRADUATION/ POST GRADUATION

Names	Sex	Age groups	Education	Educational Institute	Region
Muhib Khan	Male	23	BSC	Government College	Peshawar
Muhammad Arshad	Male	22	BS in Environmental Science	Peshawar University	Peshawar
Faizullah	Male	22	BS-Nature Applied	Peshawar University	Peshawar
Hanifullah	Male	22	Engineering	Peshawar University	Peshawar
Umair Khan	Male	22	Pharmacy	Peshawar University	Peshawar
M. Asim	Male	23	MS in Bio-Tech	Peshawar University	Peshawar
Said Ainullah	Male	22	Microbiology	Peshawar University	Peshawar
Rabia Khalid	Female	22	BBA		Karachi
Amna Tariq	Female	23	BA	Islamia College	Karachi
Saira	Female	22	BCOM	Government College of Commerce & Economics	Karachi
Anum	Female	22	BA	Premiere College	Karachi
Aqsa	Female	23	MA in Mass communication	Karachi University	Karachi
Muskan	Female	23	BBA	Technical College Saddar	Karachi
Sonia	Female	22	BCOM	P.E.C.H.S	Karachi

DETAILS OF DEPTH INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH HR MANAGERS/ OFFICERS

Name	Designation	Organization	Sector	Regions
Altaf Shahzaman	Relationship Manager HR	Standard Chartered	Banking	Karachi
Manzoor Mehdi Bawa	Program Manager	Habib Bank Limited	Banking	Karachi
Asma Mustafa Khan	Asst. Manager HR	Byco	Oil & Gas	Karachi
Maheen Inayat	Head of HR	Continental Biscuits	FMCG	Karachi
Maleeha	Relationship Manager HR	Unilever	FMCG	Karachi
Madiha Ahmed	Director Program operations USAID JOBS	Care International	NGO	Islamabad
Noureen Ayub	HR	Care International	NGO	Islamabad
Nadeem Chawhan	HR Consultant	Navitus	Training Consultant	Islamabad

CHOICES CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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PROPOSED AGENDA

Capacity Building Workshop for Career Counselors
(CHOICES – A gender sensitive Career Development Center)
11-14 January 2011 – Islamabad

Day - 1

Setting the Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (participants, institutions, trainer) • Expectations • Objectives and Agenda
Career Counseling in Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of Career Counseling for Girls/Women in Pakistan • Need of Female Focused Career Counseling
My Spheres of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life and Career Planning Activities
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career framework • Career development cycle • Concept of Career Counseling • Challenges in Pakistan • Career Development Process • CHOICES Strategies (help Women to Increase Access to and usage of CHOICES) • Current Job Trends for Women in Work Place

Day - 2

Recap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning of previous day
Career Counseling and Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How CHOICES can address women's recruitment issues • The Role of Counselor • Career Counseling in the Context of Gender and Sexual Orientation • Career Development Guidelines • Role of CHOICES Staff in Linkage Building
Spectrum of CHOICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing Choices • Resources • Format • Facilities • Personnel • Links with the community • Work experience • Implications & Limitations • CHOICES Databases • Sustainability • Closing Advice
Home Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of Exposure Visit

Day - 3

Recap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning of previous day
Exposure visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to Human Resource Development Network (HRDN) to see and understand the level of inputs provided to female for their career planning. • Visit to Attitude Skill and Knowledge (ASK) to learn the demand supply mechanism for the sustainability of CHOICES.

Day - 4

Recap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning of previous day • Share learning from exposure visit
Strategy for CHOICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action planning • Mentoring Support • Reporting Mechanism • Resource Pack & Tools
Closing Ceremony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification & Close

ACTION PLANNING TIMELINE

Institution _____ Location _____

Members: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Sr.	Activity	Detail	Start Date	Completion Date	Remarks
1	ESTABLISHMENT	Placement of banners			
		Directional signs			
		Job bulletin			
		Website			
2	STAFFING	Allocation of Staff			
		Mentoring Support			
		Career Counseling Support (Timing, location)			
3	EQUIPMENT	Allocation of computer, printer, etc.			
4	FURNITURE	Arrangement of Space for CCC staff and career counseling desk			
		Space for forms, files and folders			
5	DATABASE/LINKAGE	Director of Student			
		Director of Employers			
		Director of Student			
		Internship Program Database			
		Director of NGOs			
		Director of Training Institutions			
		Director of Recruitment Sites			
		Directory of Mentors			
		Directory of Alumnae			
Directory of Mentors					
6	FORMATS / DOCS	Assessment forms			

		Newsletters			
		Capacity Building Material			

7	AWARENESS CAMPAIGN	Departmental Seminars			
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8	Others				

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

1. Identify three significant learning that occurred for you during this training.

#	Learning
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

2. What are the key topics could have been included to make it more productive?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

3. Training Topics Learning Rating

#	Topic	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Below Average
1	Career Development Concepts and Process					
2	The Spheres of Life					
3	Counseling, Gender and Female Employment					
4	Establishing Choices					
5	Database					
6	Resource Material					

4. Trainers Facilitation Skills

#	Detail	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Bad
1	Content Grip					
2	Observation and Group Handling					
3	Question and Probing					
4	Answering Skills					
5	Motivation and Attitude					
6	Participatory Approach					

5. Training Logistics

#	Detail	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Bad
1	Training Hall					
2	Food and Refreshment					
3	Accommodation and Meals					

6. General Remarks

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ACTION PLANNING CHECKLIST – IM SCIENCES**ACTION PLANNING TIMELINE**

Institution: Institute of Management Sciences
Hayyat Abad, Peshawar.

Location

Members: 1. Nosheen Tabassum
Palwasha Kakakhel

2. Fareeha Toru

3.

Sr.#	Activity	Detail	Start Date	Completion Date	Remarks
1	ESTABLISHMENT	Placement of Banners		Feb, 11	Subject to the availability of banners
		Directional Signs		Feb, 11	Subject to the availability of banners
		Job Portal			IM Sciences has a Job Portal with Rozee pk
		Website (CHOICES Page)		March 11	CHOICES page would be added on CDC page on the Institute website.
2	STAFFING	Allocation of Staff		Feb, 11	
		Mentoring Support		Throughout the project	
		Career Counseling Support (Timing, location)			Career Counseling will be held 3days a week by the CHOICES Team
3	EQUIPMENT	Allocation of computer, printer, etc.			CDC equipment will be used for CHOICES
4	FURNITURE	Arrangement of Space for CCC staff and Career Counseling desk			CDC space will be used for counseling while Institute class rooms can also be used for counseling
		Space for forms, files and folders			CDC file racks will be used
5	DATABASE/LINKAGE	Directory of Student			The CDC already has a record of students, alumni & employers; it will keep on updating it from time to time.
		Directory of Employers			
		Directory of Alumnae			
		Internship Program Database			
		Directory of NGOs		Feb 11	
		Directory of Training Institutions		Feb-March 11	
		Directory of Recruitment Sites		Feb 11	
	Directory of Mentors				
6	FORMATS/DOCS	Assessment forms		Feb-March 11	
		Newsletters			IM Sciences Newsletter will be used for CHOICES NEWS
		Capacity Building Material			
7	AWARENESS CAMPAIGN	Departmental Seminars		Feb-March	
8	OTHERS: Job Update Sharing Linkages development Capacity Building			On-going	



CONTACT DETAILS

Zone	Coverage	Office
Southern	Sindh and Balochistan	Karachi
Central	Punjab	Lahore
Northern	NWFP, Azad Jammu Kashmir and Federal	Islamabad



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