

A Stitch in Time That Changed a Life

Zainab Haider, a resilient and hardworking woman from **Mohni Road, Lahore**, transformed her life through the power of skill development. With the support of **HomeNet Pakistan (HNP)** and the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, she completed a **three-month certified Dress Making course** at **Vocational Training Institute (VTI) Kahna**. Today, she stands tall as an independent dressmaker, proud of her journey from uncertainty to empowerment.



Early Life: A Creative Mind with Limited Means

Zainab grew up in a humble family where finances were tight, but love and creativity were abundant. From a young age, she enjoyed working with fabric, watching her mother mend clothes and imagining new designs. She always dreamed of becoming a dressmaker, but the path to professional training seemed far out of reach due to household responsibilities and lack of financial support.

“I used to imagine having my own stitching shop, designing clothes that people would admire—but I didn’t know how to begin,” Zainab recalled.

Before the Training: Dreams Stuck in Routine

Before discovering the training program, Zainab’s days were spent managing household chores. Though she had basic stitching knowledge, she lacked confidence and formal training. She wanted to help support her family financially but didn’t know how to turn her skill into a sustainable income.

“I stitched for my family occasionally, but I always wished I could do it professionally. I didn’t have the training or resources to start,” she said.

A Turning Point: Opportunity Through HNP and UNDP

Everything changed when Zainab learned about the **free certified Dress Making course** at **VTI Kahna**, facilitated by **HomeNet Pakistan** with support from **UNDP**. A field mobilizer visited her area and encouraged women to apply. Seeing it as the opportunity she had always longed for, Zainab quickly registered for the course.

“It felt like someone had opened a door that had been locked for years. I didn’t want to miss my chance,” she said with hope in her voice.

Training Experience: Gaining Skills and Confidence

The three-month training was a life-changing experience for Zainab. She learned essential skills such as **cutting, measuring, machine stitching, garment finishing**, and **basic designing**. The instructors at VTI Kahna were patient, supportive, and committed to helping every woman succeed. For Zainab, the classroom became a space of self-discovery and growth.

“I gained not only skills but also the confidence to stand on my own. Each day I learned something new,” she shared proudly.

Overcoming Challenges: Managing Family and Learning

Balancing family responsibilities and training was challenging. Zainab had to manage her home, look after her younger siblings, and still find time to attend classes regularly. There were days when she felt overwhelmed, but her determination and belief in a better future kept her going.

“There were difficult days, but I kept reminding myself that this sacrifice was temporary, and the reward would be long-lasting,” she said.

Starting a Home-Based Dressmaking Business

After completing the course, Zainab began offering **tailoring services from her home**. She started small—stitching clothes for family and neighbors. Her neat work, creative touch, and professional finishing quickly gained attention, and within a few months, she had a loyal customer base.

“My work started speaking for itself. Clients trusted me because they saw the quality,” she said with satisfaction.

Becoming Financially Independent

Zainab now earns a stable income through her home-based dressmaking business. She contributes to household expenses and has started saving for her future. For the first time, she feels financially empowered and proud to support her family. Her husband and parents admire her dedication and hard work.

“The feeling of being able to provide is indescribable. It has changed how I see myself,” she said emotionally.

Inspiring Other Women on Mohni Road

Zainab’s journey has inspired many women in her neighborhood. She often shares her experience with young girls and homemakers who are hesitant to take the first step. She encourages them to learn a skill and build their confidence. Her goal is to open a small stitching center where she can train others.

“When women support each other, we all rise. I want to help others find their path like I found mine,” she said with determination.

Gratitude to HNP and UNDP

Zainab is deeply thankful to **HomeNet Pakistan and UNDP** for making quality training accessible to women like her. She believes the training didn’t just teach her stitching—it gave her independence, confidence, and purpose.

“Without HNP and UNDP, I would still be dreaming. Now I’m living that dream,” she expressed with a smile.

Conclusion: Stitching a Future with Strength

From a hopeful dreamer to a skilled dressmaker and role model in her community, **Zainab Haider’s story** is a shining example of how the right support and opportunity can change lives. With the help of HNP and UNDP, Zainab has stitched together a life filled with dignity, pride, and empowerment—one thread at a time.