UNDP Pakistan has prepared a series of profiles highlighting particularly dynamic women involved in the May 2013 elections. These profiles will spotlight empowered women strengthening democracy in Pakistan as polling officials, master trainers and trainees of the elections results management system, constables, candidates contesting in elections, senior superintendent of police and many more.

Zameer Akhtar
Trainee,
Training of Master Trainers for Polling Officials

“Our vote is our voice. If we do not vote, we will not get the leadership that we need to reduce inflation, eradicate poverty and provide access to good quality education.”

Zameer Akhtar
Zameer Akhtar, 28, will be training polling officials of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the upcoming elections in May 2013. Born in Chakwal and raised in Islamabad, she felt compelled to take part in election trainings due to mistrust and lack of public confidence in the previous elections.

Currently studying for a postgraduate research degree in International Relations, Zameer hopes for an empowered Pakistan that is respected worldwide. Her pillar of strength, her father, supported her decision to be actively involved in the elections. She said, “It was initially difficult to get the consent of my elders as we live in a joint family, so I am extremely grateful to my father for supporting me throughout.”

At the training program for master trainers, the demonstration of the polling process includes several new initiatives including the use of electoral rolls with voters’ photographs, new counting forms, and tamper proof bags. Once she becomes a master trainer Zameer will in turn train polling officials of the Election Commission of Pakistan.

The training manual developed by the Election Commission of Pakistan with support from UNDP and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) provides step by step guidance to trainers on how to set up a mock polling station as part of the interactive and practical training provided to polling officials.

Equipped with a training manual, Zameer feels confident to conduct further trainings at the district level. Her job is to ensure the polling officials are effectively trained for a well-organized polling and counting process at every polling station.

Zameer says, “This training will help polling officials understand the electoral process well. This would consequently lead to fair and unbiased elections.”

She hopes that the new elected government, especially female parliamentarians will work for the cause of underprivileged women.

“A lot of our women want to do something positive for their household, community or country. I feel the elections process is a wonderful opportunity that gives them the chance to take part in shaping the future of Pakistan. I decided to participate and set an example to encourage such women.”

Zameer Akhtar

UNDP is assisting the Election Commission of Pakistan to train its polling officials in an effort to ensure the credibility of the polling process and increase public confidence for the May 11 general elections. Over 600,000 presiding officers, assistant presiding officers and polling officers are being trained who will be engaged throughout the country on election day.

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