



# EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION OF PAKISTAN

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## PRESS RELEASE

### More than 1000 Informal Workers given Formal Jobs in Sialkot & Faisalabad

As a result of consistent efforts by the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP), leading industries have become **"Equal Opportunity Employers"** and have opened doors of "Formal Employment" for women who were earlier unemployed or working as "home-based workers" in Sialkot. The Employers' Federation of Pakistan has been advocating for Gender Equality for Employers through the platform of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SCCI) and Faisalabad Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FCCI) since past couple of years. During first half of September 2011, EFP organized two-day training courses on "Gender-Responsive Work Practices" for Sialkot and Faisalabad-based Employers where it was revealed that some of the employers have started giving equal opportunities of decent employment to women workers – which was unusual in local culture. Subsequently, the President EFP, Haji Muhammad Javaid, along with representatives from local NGO, Baidarie paid a visit to some of the industries of Sialkot including Forward Sports, Mansha Brothers and Capital Sports and were impressed with the good examples set by Employers. Similarly, in Faisalabad President EFP visited Sitara Group of Industries and saw their impressive work for gender equality. In workshop, the representatives from Interloop private limited also highlighted their efforts and commitment for gender equality.



It was heartening to note that the Employers are not only recruiting women workers, but they have also introduced a number of policy reforms in their system to encourage women workers. Some of these special arrangements and improved working conditions including 'Free transport' for women workers; separate resting area and wash rooms for women workers; Equal wages as that for men workers; Equal access to social security benefits; Shorter duration of 'probation period'; Full pay during training period for new entrants; Continuous training on advanced technological machines (e.g. thermo-bonding); six-week paid maternity leave; Equal growth opportunities for men and women workers; Opportunity to join Workers' Union and collective bargaining; and strict adherence to outcome and performance-based incentives and providing bonuses for better performance.

As a result of these reforms these organizations have been able to achieve dividends like brand imaging and better scoring on Social Compliance Audit by international buyers – subsequently continuous work orders from leading brands and more women workers joining

the industry in different cadres. According to HR Managers and Owners, women workers are better performing than men and are more productive; better discipline at workplace;

Better equipped human resources in terms of trained women supervisors, machinists and production line managers.

Employers are quite motivated and inspired with these advocacy events and are planning for more beneficial schemes for women workers including establishment of high-tech training institutes for enabling them to access better employment opportunities.

Having seen these good practices and practical examples during two-day training of Employers on **“Gender Responsive Practices at Workplace”** a number of other industries have given their word to give equal opportunities for Decent Employment to women workers of two industrial cities. They unanimously requested for support for establishment of a “Training Village” to address ever increasing need of skilled workforce for different industries.

In this whole success, the local implementing agency Baidarie has a great role – not only in advocating the issue with Employers but also motivating rural women to join formal employment in factories. Due to cultural constraints, rural women of Sialkot were not allowed to go to factories rather they were engaged in home-based works which was replete with exploitation and discrimination. With the support of ILO and UN-Women, Baidarie has prepared a Baseline on the status of rural home-based workers and it is really heartening to note that during a short period, significant change could be seen among the right-holders.



The Employers’ Federation of Pakistan (EFP) is collaborating with ILO’s “Towards Gender Parity in Pakistan (TGP)” Project for carrying out a series of Advocacy Workshops and Capacity Building Workshops for Employers, Industrialists and Traders to adopt Gender Equality Policies.

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