



WOMEN'S REGIONAL NETWORK
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Leading in: young Pakistani women recognized for their achievements during Second Congress

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The Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, the Australian Government, City School, and Women's Regional Network jointly organized the 'Emerging Young Leaders Congress 2017' in Islamabad, Pakistan between 5-7 April. The conference brought together exceptional young women from across Pakistan so they could share their leadership experiences and challenges they face in the field, network among one another, and build on new ideas. One of the fellows who attended the Congress is Madiha Noor from Jafarabad, Balochistan who works as a project coordinator for a program sponsored by the Malala Fund. Women's rights activist Shawana Shah from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was another participant. Shah started a NGO called Da Hawwa Lur which aims to promote women's political, social, and economic participation at the grassroots. (Read more about our participants at [WRN's Facebook Page](#))

The fellows took part in interactive sessions organized around thematic areas such as politics and media. They also visited the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services and Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), which supports over 5 million poor women by providing them with monetary stipend. Ms Marvi Memon, Minister of State and Chairperson of the Program, announced that the fellows will now serve as "brand ambassadors" of BISP and have the opportunity to propose and manage projects in collaboration with 50,000 committees. The Congress members are currently designing creative marketing strategies to promote handicrafts made by BISP women and working to provide them with tools so that their products can compete in international markets. The participants will also provide training to economically marginalized women on nutrition, hygiene, basic finance, counting, maternal and child health.

Since women activists in the region face similar challenges and are fighting a hard battle to make their voices heard, through the Congress the participants had the chance to network with their sisters in India and Afghanistan. Looking to the future, it would be valuable to organize a bigger regional Congress for women from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India so young aspiring leaders can learn from experienced mentors and work together in shaping peace, equality, justice, and security in their countries.