



“The CHSS initiative has been nothing short of transformative, and I feel incredibly blessed to have been a part of this journey. Being involved in a project that has empowered scholars from conflict-affected areas of Pakistan—people whose talents have long been under-recognized—has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life.

This initiative is a testament to a deep, unwavering commitment to advancing scholarship, promoting equity, and nurturing intellectual communities in Asia. By lifting the voices of under-represented scholars, CHSS has done more than empower individuals; it has enriched the entire landscape of humanities and social sciences with fresh perspectives—perspectives that might have otherwise gone unheard. For every scholar who has been part of this journey, this program has been a life-changing experience. It has given them the resources, mentorship, and validation needed to believe in their own potential. One of the most powerful aspects of CHSS has been its ability to ensure that the stories and research coming from conflict-affected areas in Pakistan are no longer sidelined in international discourse. This initiative is a beacon of hope for young Pakistani scholars, many of whom have faced insurmountable challenges. It is a reminder that even in the most difficult circumstances, with the right support, talent can thrive.

This program has broken down barriers caused by security concerns, limited funding, and institutional instability. It has ignited resilience and ambition in the hearts of these scholars, showing them that they are capable of making their mark on the world. And perhaps most importantly, it has given them the confidence to see themselves not just as recipients of knowledge, but as active contributors to the global academic conversation. The empathy and inclusivity that form the core of this initiative have touched everyone involved. It’s been a holistic approach—combining cultural understanding, social support, and a multidisciplinary framework—that has created something truly special. The changes I’ve witnessed in the participants during just a five-day workshop have been profound, and they have left me in awe. The shift in how they view themselves and their place in the academic world has been nothing short of miraculous, and being part of that transformation has been the greatest reward.

The true beauty of this program lies in its conceptualization. It wasn’t just about giving people the chance to learn; it was about empowering those from marginalized institutions and communities. It showed us all the incredible power of collective action fueled by compassion, vision, and a deep belief in the potential of others. For many participants, this was their first opportunity to travel abroad, and the impact of that experience stretches far beyond the academic sphere. It has created stronger bridges of understanding and has made the world just a little bit smaller—a bit more connected—by strengthening cross-cultural ties.

I can’t express enough how profoundly grateful I am to Sida and AAS for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this incredible initiative. The scholars who have participated in this project will carry its lessons, empowerment, and sense of belonging with them for the rest of their lives. For me, it has been a privilege to play a small role in something so meaningful, and I will carry the memory of this journey with me always.”

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