



Raising the Profile of Women in Pakistani Media

Groundbreaking programming is offering women in Pakistan a chance to make their voices heard on wide-ranging issues. Internews has trained a cadre of professional journalists who are tackling difficult subjects and serving as role models for young women.

Internews is working to raise the profile of women in Pakistani media by supporting production of radio programs in the Urdu and Pashto languages. The syndicated radio programs are designed to promote dialogue on women's issues in the media.

UNIQUE PROGRAM IS AN IMMEDIATE HIT

Meri Awaz Suno (Hear My Voice), was an immediate hit from its launch in August 2003. The radio series appeals to a diverse national audience unaccustomed to hearing such high-quality radio programs.

Meri Awaz Suno is unique because it is produced exclusively by women, on women's issues. The programs are offered free of charge to FM stations around the country, reaching a potential audience of tens of thousands.

TRAINING OF NOVICE REPORTERS CREATES PROFESSIONAL ROLE MODELS

Before Internews training, most reporters working on *Meri Awaz Suno* had little

experience working in radio or journalism. Now they are leaders – the first women in Pakistan to work as independent radio journalists. They are multi-skilled, able to work as researchers, reporters, presenters and editors. They have produced over 100 radio programs to date.

This year the team will produce four different fifteen-minute programs for distribution to the nation's FM stations:

- *Meri Awaz Suno* will continue to address women's health, economic, political, cultural, and social issues.
- *Shakhsi Khakey* (In-depth Profiles), will carry profiles of the famous and not so famous women of Pakistan.
- A 13-part radio drama series on reproductive health issues is planned.
- A series of five programs each in the Sindhi, Pashto and Punjabi languages will be produced.

UNIVERSITY HOSTS PASHTO-LANGUAGE RADIO PROGRAM

Since August 2004, Internews has also been supporting the production of a pioneering Pashto-language women's radio program based at Peshawar University Broadcast Academy. *Hawa Aur Doonya*

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Meri Awaz Suno producer Bushra Iqbal interviewing Afghan refugee women in Rawalpindi on the right to vote. The popular program reaches a potential audience of tens of thousands.

(Women and the World), is a weekly 15-minute program with a format similar to the Urdu-language *Meri Awaz Suno* women's program.

As the title suggests, the program looks at gender issues in the traditional Pashtun province of North West Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan.

The program has covered stories about women and sport, controversial rape laws, problems faced by women using public transport, arranged marriages and child labor, among others. A total of 30 *Hawa Aur Doonya* programs were produced last year; 72 are planned for this year.

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