A British Asian Trust feedback report

Out of the Shadows

Scaling up our Mental Health programme to tackle the crisis in Pakistan.
“We got to know about the clinic through the Community Mental Health Worker who came to our door. **It was such a relief to unburden my thoughts.** The psychologist recommended that I bring my wife to the sessions… Now our relationship is much better. **We will continue coming to these sessions because we feel they’re making a difference.**”

Mr Umair, speaking about his experience of counselling.
Thank you

Your Ramadan appeal donations are helping to support our mental health work in Pakistan.

Pakistan’s mental health crisis has left almost 90% of the people in need of treatment without any access to help. Your generous support, including Zakat-giving and match funding from the CareTech Foundation and COSARAF Charitable Foundation, will help to scale up our mental health programme in the country and address critical gaps in understanding and support services.

Because of you we are reaching more people, changing more lives, and helping to bring about transformational change.
The impact your support is enabling

**Raising awareness**
Through door-to-door visits, community meetings and training, we are ensuring that communities, employers and care professionals have a better understanding of mental health issues and where and how to access support.

**Access to quality services**
By using technology, training mental health workers in the community and establishing a referral pathway, we ensure people are able to access quality and appropriate support when they need it most.

**Reaching the most vulnerable**
We are increasing specialist support for vulnerable groups, such as adolescents and pregnant women. We are engaging with faith healers to increase understanding and outreach in the community; and we are developing a network of expert stakeholders to share knowledge and skills – maximising collaboration and learning.

**Training health professionals**
Mental health training is not included in the majority of teaching hospitals. We are providing basic counselling-skills training to doctors and nurses, and to community health workers, so that people with mental health issues are getting better support.

“Mental health is a critically under-resourced issue across South Asia. We’re helping the British Asian Trust to break the stigma and support people to access services. It’s making a real and sustainable change in communities.”

Haroone Sheikh, Chief Executive of CareTech plc. and Chairman of the CareTech Foundation and COSARAF Charitable Foundation.
Salma’s story

Salma had an arranged marriage when she was 20 but after seven years her husband died, leaving her with four young daughters. Salma was forced by her family to marry her husband’s younger brother.

The family now live with her in-laws in a household of 15 people (eight of whom are children) but her new husband has to live in Karachi to earn money working in a factory. He sends back Rs.20,000 (approx £100) every month but only visits once a year. The family is barely getting by.

When Salma recently had a fourth child, she developed depression. She seemed detached, constantly anxious and did not connect well with her new baby.

Salma first came to our partner for their antenatal clinic, which offered regular ultrasounds and check-ups with a gynaecologist. After her daughter’s birth, she told them about her low mood and spoke to their lay counsellor who referred her for an online psychiatric assessment. **Salma has now started online consultations with a psychologist.**

It is early days. Salma still feels sad and regularly cries, but she says she already feels a little less anxious and is hopeful about the future. She wants to feel closer to her youngest daughter, find work, create a more secure life for her family and put the constant stress of recent years behind her.

“I’ve seen Salma become so tense and barely look after herself. She used to joke with her first husband, now she barely smiles. She’s told me about the doctor she is seeing, and she seems really happy about consultations with her.”

Salma’s sister-in-law.
Why good mental health matters

Without appropriate support, mental health conditions can significantly worsen a person’s wellbeing and their ability to bring in an income and maintain relationships. Mental health issues can lead to loss of employment, alcohol and drug dependency, hospitalisation and even suicide – with a knock-on effect on a nation’s economy.

The British Asian Trust started working on mental health in Pakistan in 2012, supporting local partners to improve access to clinical care. But in the last year, with the catalytic help of our supporters and the CareTech and COSARAF Foundations, we have significantly scaled up our ambition and our programme. We have increased the mental health awareness of over 86,000 people and improved the mental health of over 9,700 people through access to quality and appropriate support. We believe that lifting the silence around mental health, and educating communities and health workers, can transform mental health provision in the country.

We’ve increased the mental health awareness of over 86,000 people

We’ve improved mental health through access to quality support for over 9,700 people
**Fauzia’s story**

Fauzia was cut off from her family when, at 14, she eloped to Karachi with her boyfriend from school. The couple went on to have three children, but her husband’s income as a government clerk scarcely covered the cost of food.

Fauzia’s husband started taking drugs – and then dealing in them too. First he was on heroin and later crystal meth, and they affected his mind and behaviour. He fought with Fauzia and shouted at his children. **Fauzia developed constant anxiety and she started to spiral into depression.**

She had come across our partner’s local health clinic and was curious when she saw that they were running a session on mental health. Listening to what was said, she was deeply affected and by the end of it she was sobbing. **For the first time in five years, Fauzia opened up to someone else about what she was going through.** The nurse who was there listened to her, calmed her and then advised her about how things could change.

Fauzia took part in weekly support group sessions and started to take better care of herself. She had online counselling with our partner’s psychologist and understood that she was not responsible for her husband’s actions. She learned to calm herself when she felt angry and has made friends in her neighborhood. She has even started looking for a job and is excited about the prospect of standing on her own feet.

**Now Fauzia is able to say confidently: “Every home has its own unique problems. We mustn’t be afraid to talk about these issues.”**

Fauzia wants the drug dens across Karachi to be shut down. She says the problem of substance abuse is so widespread that the government has to be involved and the public must press them to get drugs off the streets.

“I never saw her mixing with the other neighbours. **She would keep to herself.** A few months ago, I noticed she had started laughing and smiling again, and talking to people on the street. I asked her what had changed, and she told me that she had got help from a nearby clinic. **I am very happy that she feels better now.**”

Seema, neighbour.
Some recent achievements over a three month period, supported by your Ramadan donations.

**Over 23,400** people have been reached through awareness raising activities and mental health services.

**139** people have started receiving one-to-one counselling sessions to help improve their mental health.

**Over 280** people have been referred for specialist mental health support.
Our ambition

We believe that early intervention can help millions of people live productive and fulfilling lives and lessen the long-term burden of care.

By 2021, we aim to have reached over 500,000 people. In the coming year our plans include:

We are working with ambassadors like Hajra Khan and Sanam Saeed to amplify the message of good mental health for all to all segments of society.

Working with adolescents with a focus on early prevention. We will involve students, parents and teachers in awareness raising sessions and will train teachers to spot and respond to signs of mental health issues.

We will focus on increasing specialised support and referrals. We are building our network and partners’ capacity to attend to key issues of substance abuse and maternal mental health.

We are delighted that the Pakistan Cricket Board are formally supporting out mental health work and we are developing our partnership with them. Through the power of their voice, we hope to amplify awareness of mental health issues across the country.
Stay involved

You can continue to support our Mental Health programme, or support any of our other work, by making a donation during Ramadan or donating your Zakat throughout the year.

www.britishasiantrust.org/support-us/give-your-zakat

Do talk to your colleagues and friends about our work. We continue to welcome the engagement of professional networks, community and faith groups. And if you are a business, trust or foundation, we would be pleased to discuss further ways for you to get involved. Please contact us at info@britishasiantrust.org for more information.

Remain up to date with news of our programmes and impact, by visiting our website where you can also sign up to receive e-news: www.britishasiantrust.org

In the last year we have fundraised with a variety of professional networks and community groups. These have included an Islamic Institute, who helped us fundraise for mental health, bringing awareness of our programme to 1,600 pupils and parents. Will your school, business or community group partner with us?
Most of the patients have never experienced counselling before, but the process provides them with a safe outlet for their mental health problems – which cannot be solved only with medication. This gives them a great deal of hope.”

Samia Ikhlas, Programme Psychologist, speaking about her counselling work.