



PAKISTAN YOUTH
CHANGE
ADVOCATES

DREAM. STRIVE. ACHIEVE.



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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President's Message



Rafia Tehseen

President, Board of Directors

At Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA), we hold steadfast to the belief that, "Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well." This conviction propels us to pursue every breakthrough—no matter how modest—with enthusiasm, knowing that small steps pave the way for monumental victories. And it reminds us, time and again, that perseverance always leads to meaningful impact.

Twelve years since its inception, PYCA remains unwavering in its mission to contribute to a Pakistan that is literate, healthy, and truly prosperous.

As we reflect on the year 2024, we are filled with gratitude for the partnerships and support that have made our journey possible. Together, we have worked to transform lives, strengthen communities, and drive sustainable progress.

This year's Annual Report celebrates our milestones, acknowledges the invaluable contributions of our partners and supporters, and highlights the untiring efforts of our team. These pages are a testament to what we can achieve together, and they inspire us to continue striving for greater heights.

We invite you to explore this report and join us in celebrating the impact we've created as a collective force for good. With your continued support and shared commitment, we look forward to advancing our mission in the years to come.

Stronger together!

In gratitude and solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rafia Tehseen".

Rafia Tehseen
President
Board of Directors



Executive Director's Message



Areebah Shahid
Executive Director

As we close another year, I am filled with immense gratitude for the incredible people and organizations that make PYCA's work possible. Heartfelt thanks to our governmental and non-governmental partners, donors, individual philanthropists and our collaborators in the academia, and media for their steadfast support. To our remarkable team members—your passion and commitment are the backbone of our success.



In partnership with the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), we continue to operate five accelerated learning centers, providing second-chance education to 150 out-of-school children aged 8 to 17 years. This year also marked the launch of our school-meal program, a labor of love powered entirely by crowdfunding and individual generosity.

On the public health front, our TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign made headway in advocating for a legislative ban on partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) and eliminating industrially produced trans-fatty acids (iTFAs). Through engaging parliamentarians, senior government officials, and the public, we aim to create a healthier future for Pakistan.

We look ahead with the hope that your continued support will continue to be by our side, driving us to create lasting change.

With gratitude,



Areebah Shahid
Executive Director
Pakistan Youth Change Advocates



PYCA at a Glance

At PYCA, we envision a diverse Pakistan where education, good governance, and the well-being of every individual are paramount. Since 2013, we have built a lasting presence across the country, impacting lives and fostering meaningful change.



Vision

A diverse Pakistan where the value of education, good governance and ultimately human life and well-being reigns supreme.

Mission

To bring down barriers that limit the most underserved Pakistanis, especially women and girls from realizing their full potential to prosper.

Core Values



Ambition

We are aware of the many limitations that will come in the way of our mission. Our faith in the importance of our mission must, however, be stronger than the most pressing challenges that come our way.



Hard Work

There is no substitute to hard work. If something is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well.



Perseverance

Success is never served on a silver platter. It demands the unwavering resolve to continue treading forward. This persistence is especially important to the mission when faced with difficulty or delay in achieving success.



Integrity

Ambition, hard work, and perseverance can only flourish in an environment governed by strength of character. Holding on to integrity allows us to be both united and consistent in our efforts.

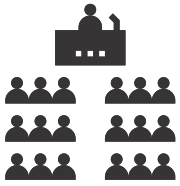
A Year in Review: 2024



15
Districts



5,500
Community
Members
Mobilized



50
Parliamentarians
& Policymakers
Sensitized



70m
Media
Engagements



5
Learning
Centers



150
Enrolled
Students

Government Partners

Ministry of National Health Services,
Regulations & Coordination (MoNHSR&C)

Federal Directorate of Education

Islamabad Food Authority

Punjab Food Authority

Balochistan Food Authority

Financial Turnover

- 2022-23 to 2023-24 ▲
95.84%
- 2023-24 to 2024-25 (projected) ▲
19.76%
- 2022-23 to 2024-25 (total increase over 3 years) ▲
134.54%



Education



Accelerated Learning Centers for Out-of-School Children

PYCA continued its mission to provide quality education through five accelerated learning centers in rural localities of Islamabad, including two in Naughazi and one each in Badia Qadir Bakhsh, Bokra, and I-14. Operated in partnership with the Federal Directorate of Education, these centers offer second-chance education to out-of-school children aged 8 to 17 years, helping bridge educational gaps for underserved communities.



Key Milestones

Recognizing the link between nutrition and learning, PYCA introduced a school meal program in 2024, ensuring that every student received at least one nutritious meal daily while at school.

In 2024, 15 students graduated from the accelerated primary learning course and were successfully mainstreamed into Grade 6 within the same public schools.

■ **90%**
of our students are girls

■ **20%**
increase in enrollment compared to 2023





Shahnaz Hashmi Memorial Scholarship for Girls

The *Shahnaz Hashmi Memorial Scholarship for Girls* is a tribute to a woman who, despite limited formal education, understood the transformative power of learning. Shahnaz Hashmi believed that education is the key to empowering a woman and worked to ensure that the girls in her family could achieve higher education. Inspired by her vision, this scholarship supports one deserving young woman each year to pursue college or university education, overcoming financial barriers that often hinder girls from completing their studies.



Ayesha is the eldest of eight siblings in a family burdened with significant financial hardships. Her father, a daily wage laborer, understandably struggles to provide for basic household needs, leaving little to no resources for educational expenses such as uniforms, transport, and stationery. This financial strain forced Ayesha's younger sisters to drop out of school, and Ayesha herself had to pause her studies for a year after completing Grade 11.

Recognizing her potential and determination, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection & Welfare Commission referred Ayesha's case to PYCA for support. As a result, she was awarded the *Shahnaz Hashmi Memorial Scholarship*, enabling her to re-enroll in the second year of a pre-medical program in her hometown, Charsaddah.

Ayesha aspires to become a nurse or a trained birth attendant, dedicated to improving healthcare for women and children in her community. Her journey and determination are truly inspiring, and we are honored to play a small role in supporting Ayesha through the *Shahnaz Hashmi Scholarship for Girls*.

"After struggling to continue my education, I had almost lost hope. Now, I am back in college, and determined to serve the women and children in my community. I am deeply grateful for this support—it has not only provided me with the opportunity to continue my education but has also given me the confidence to believe in myself again."

– Ayesha Fazal





Voices for Change: Education Town Halls

With the support and patronage of the Society for Access to Quality Education (SAQE), PYCA organized five town halls in Lahore, Dera Ismail Khan (D.I Khan), Attock, Jamrud and Rawalpindi districts in 2024. These town halls provided a platform for dialogue, bringing together parliamentarians, policymakers, and local community members to address pressing education issues.



The town halls enabled communities to directly voice their concerns to policymakers and parliamentarians, fostering immediate responses and paving the way for long-term solutions. Critical issues raised included upgrading local schools, constructing additional classrooms, increasing education budgets, granting greater autonomy to school heads for budget utilization, and providing safe and free transport for girls. Additionally, demands were made to rebuild schools damaged by floods and ensure inclusive infrastructure for children with disabilities in mainstream government schools.

At the close of each event, the parliamentarians signed pledges committing to pursue tangible improvements vis-a-vis the issues that were raised. Continued collaborations are underway to ensure the pledges translate into actions.



■ **500**
community members
involved

■ **20**
policymakers and
parliamentarians
engaged





< 2% iTFA



...s that allow the food industry to evade the iTFA standards
...eed to be addressed through a regulation that limits iTFA
...to less than 2% of the total fats in ALL FOODS!

...s fats are limited to less than 2 percent of the total fats in all foods.

Public Health



TRANSFORM Pakistan Campaign

In 2024, PYCA's TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign continued to champion public health by focusing on eliminating industrially produced trans-fatty acids from Pakistan's food supply. Working in close collaboration with stakeholders from the government, academia, media and civil society, the campaign intensified its efforts to push for the regulation of iTFA and advocate for a legislative ban on partially hydrogenated oils.



1. Media Engagement

70 million media engagements



18 press releases & 11 op-eds



12 televised programs



42 national celebrities & influencers engaged



12 live webinars, X Spaces & podcasts



70 trained journalists



2. Policy Advocacy

A significant highlight of the campaign has been its ability to engage high-level stakeholders and build national consensus on the regulation of industrial trans fats, as well as a legislative ban on their primary raw material, i.e. PHOs.

From its inception, the campaign has enjoyed the patronage of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination. It has also successfully established formal partnerships with the Islamabad, Punjab, and Balochistan food authorities.

These engagements have been instrumental in fostering a cross-sectoral, national consensus on the need for immediate action to protect public health from the dangers of industrially produced trans fats.



Key Milestones

As a direct result of civil society-led efforts, the Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) regulated 76 food items in 2024. It is expected that a nationwide regulation to limit iTFAs in all foods will be approved in early 2025.

To advance the legislative ban on PHOs, the campaign engaged 30 key decisionmakers including members of the National Assembly and Senate as well as representatives from the PSQCA and the five food authorities.





3. Youth Mobilization

The TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign continues PYCA's belief in the power of youth-led advocacy to drive meaningful change. Anchored in a strategic, multi-phase approach, the campaign focuses on building the capacity of university youth to lead initiatives for regulating iTFAs and banning PHOs in Pakistan.



The process begins with orientation sessions held at partner universities to raise awareness among young people about the health risks associated with iTFAs and the urgent need for their regulation. At the conclusion of each session, attendees are invited to submit project ideas that align with the campaign's policy objectives. Selected student groups then undergo a comprehensive capacity-building program designed to deepen their understanding of the issue and refine their advocacy skills.

Following the training, participants develop time-bound work plans with clear, measurable performance indicators to ensure focus and accountability in their efforts. These student groups are provided with ongoing technical and financial support to successfully implement their project ideas, amplifying the campaign's impact.

Under the TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign, partnerships have been forged with Karachi University, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Iqra University Islamabad Campus, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS), Lahore, Rawalpindi Women University and Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering & Information Technology (KFUEIT), Rahim Yar Khan.

■ **2,500**
youth made aware
through orientations

■ **85**
students supported to
roll-out community
projects

■ **5,000**
people made aware
about the hazards of
trans fats through
youth leaders





Testimonials



A Chorus of Collaboration: Reflections on PYCA's Impact



Ms. Asia Tanoli

Member National Assembly of Pakistan

PYCA's unwavering dedication to education and public health is truly commendable. Their efforts to provide second-chance education and advocate for public health reforms, like the TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign, are making a tangible difference in the lives of countless Pakistanis. As a parliamentarian, I remain committed to supporting PYCA in its mission to create a healthier, more educated Pakistan.



Ms. Fawzia Arshad

Senator

PYCA's work in championing education and health initiatives exemplifies the power of advocacy and collaboration. From providing opportunities for out-of-school children to their groundbreaking TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign, PYCA is addressing key challenges with innovation and impact. As a parliamentarian, I stand firmly with PYCA in their quest for a healthier and more educated Pakistan, and I look forward to contributing to this shared vision.



Mr. Zarrar Khuhro

Senior Journalist and Television Anchorperson

My collaboration with PYCA over the past four years has been most rewarding. Whether raising awareness among parliamentarians or engaging the general public on critical issues like education and public health, PYCA consistently brings innovation and passion to the table.



Dr. Mehreen Mujtaba

Director Nutrition & Climate Change, MoNHSR&C

PYCA's TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign is a groundbreaking initiative that addresses one of the most pressing public health challenges in our country. By advocating for the elimination of industrially produced trans fats and pushing for a legislative ban on partially hydrogenated oils, PYCA is safeguarding the health and well-being of countless Pakistanis.



Ms. Sumaira Liaquat

Principal, Islamabad Model School for Girls, Badia Qadir

A heartfelt thank you to Pakistan Youth Change Advocates for their support to the out-of-school girls in our community. PYCA's efforts to provide educational opportunities have profoundly impacted the lives of young girls. Your dedication to empowering these girls is truly commendable.



Dr. Allah Rakha

Associate Professor, NIFSAT, University of Agriculture Faisalabad

PYCA is playing a pivotal role in our fight against trans fats. By engaging with academia and youth from all across Pakistan, they have aligned the key voices of our society. I am sure through their concerted efforts they are going to overcome the menace of trans fats from our food supply very soon.



Dr. Sobia Masood

Head of Department, Psychology
Rawalpindi Women University

PYCA is making remarkable strides in uplifting vulnerable communities across Pakistan through its focus on education, public health and nutrition, and civic participation. By fostering access to quality education and raising awareness about critical health and nutrition issues, PYCA is empowering individuals to lead healthier, more informed lives.



Mr. Munawar Hussain

Senior Nutrition Expert

PYCA's ability to mobilize youth, policymakers, and the media has been instrumental in driving meaningful public health advocacy. Their efforts under the TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign exemplify how collective action can create lasting change. It has been inspiring to witness their dedication to advancing policies for a safer food supply and a healthier Pakistan.



Ms. Tayyaba Khalid

Youth Ambassador, Khawaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan

PYCA's dedication to empowering youth and fostering positive change is truly inspiring. Their programs not only provide essential skills but also instill a sense of purpose and leadership. I am proud to support such a transformative organization.



Muhammad Zahid Akhtar

Youth Ambassador, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Lahore

I am thrilled to be a part of this transformative journey, and I am grateful to have volunteered for PYCA last year. Here, I had the opportunity to lead the school awareness project on trans fats, which was a truly enriching experience. Witnessing the positive impact of our efforts has been incredibly fulfilling.



Ms. Azra Qayyum

Helpline Officer, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection & Welfare Commission

Through its higher education scholarship program, PYCA has supported the KPCP&WC's mission of enabling female students to pursue education. This does not merely transform individual lives but entire communities. This stands as a testament to the organization's commitment to creating a more inclusive and educated Pakistan.

Picture Gallery



Team PYCA



MoU Signing with Director General, Punjab Food Authority



Summer Camp on Socio-emotional Learning in Collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training



Students at PYCA's Center for Out-of-School Children at Naughazi, Tarnol



Town Hall Meeting on Education Emergency Held with Local Community Representatives and Parliamentarians in Dera Ismail Khan



Youth Volunteers from Iqra University Islamabad Campus at a Walk Organized on World Diabetes Day



Youth-led Consultation with Governmental Stakeholders at UVAS, Lahore



The PYCA Team at Media Advocacy Workshops



Media Gallery

Navigating Pakistan's education emergency



Time to tackle trans fats



Regulating trans-fatty acids



Campaign for health threats of trans-fats presence in food held



Eliminating trans fats



Food safety and quality standards authority



Food safety and quality standards authority (FSQA) has issued a public notice regarding the regulation of trans fats in food products. The notice states that trans fats are a major health concern and their presence in food products is being strictly regulated. FSQA is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to ensure that all food products comply with the new regulations. The regulations require that trans fat content in food products be reduced to a maximum of 2 percent. FSQA is also conducting regular inspections of food processing facilities to ensure compliance with the regulations. The authority is committed to protecting public health and ensuring the safety and quality of food products available in Pakistan.

Tackling trans fats

Concerted efforts are required to address the trans-fats challenge effectively

By Dr Saba Anwar

In a world where health awareness is on the rise, the importance of understanding what we consume cannot be overstated. Recently, a report published by the World Health Organization (WHO) has shed light on a critical issue facing Pakistan's food industry: the presence of industrially produced trans fats in various food products. These fats, often found in processed foods, are linked to an increased risk of heart disease and other health complications.

The high trans fat content in many processed foods is a significant public health concern. In Pakistan, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR), is working to address this issue. The PCSIR has conducted extensive research on the health effects of trans fats and has developed guidelines for their regulation. The Ministry of Health is also implementing measures to reduce the trans fat content in food products, including public awareness campaigns and stricter regulations on food labeling.

Public awareness is a key component in tackling the trans fat issue. The PCSIR has conducted numerous campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of trans fats and how to make healthier food choices. These campaigns include distributing educational materials, conducting workshops, and using mass media to reach a wide audience. The Ministry of Health is also working to ensure that food products are properly labeled with their trans fat content, allowing consumers to make informed decisions.

It is crucial for the government, industry, and consumers to work together to address the trans fat challenge. The government should continue to support research and implementation of regulations to reduce trans fat content in food products. The food industry should adopt healthier production practices and transparent labeling. Consumers should be encouraged to read food labels carefully and choose products with lower trans fat content. By taking these steps, we can significantly reduce the health risks associated with trans fats and promote a healthier population.

The presence of trans fats in our food supply is a public health concern that requires immediate attention. Through concerted efforts from all stakeholders, we can effectively tackle this challenge and ensure a healthier future for Pakistan.

Dr Saba Anwar is a public health expert and researcher at the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR).

PHOs, PYCA, PIPS lead high-level parliamentary roundtable on industrial trans fats

A high-level parliamentary roundtable on industrial trans fats was held in Islamabad, bringing together representatives from the Pakistan Health Organization (PHO), Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA), and Pakistan Industrial Processors' Association (PIPA). The roundtable focused on the health risks of trans fats and the need for regulatory action.

TRANSFORM Pakistan Campaign: Youth Groups Across Pakistan Demand the Regulation of Trans-fats in All Foods

The TRANSFORM Pakistan Campaign, a coalition of youth groups across the country, has issued a call for the regulation of trans fats in all foods. The campaign is part of a global effort to reduce the health risks associated with trans fats. Youth groups in various provinces have organized protests, rallies, and awareness campaigns to demand government action on this issue. They are calling for the implementation of strict regulations to limit the trans fat content in all food products and for the establishment of a national standard for trans fats.

Civil society bodies unite to combat diseases by curbing iTFAs in all dietary sources

Civil society organizations have united to combat diseases by curbing industrially produced trans fats (iTFA) in all dietary sources. The coalition includes health professionals, researchers, and community groups. They are working to raise awareness about the health risks of iTFA and to pressure the government to take action. The coalition has organized a series of events, including seminars, workshops, and public demonstrations, to educate the public and policymakers. They are also conducting research and monitoring the trans fat content in food products to ensure compliance with regulations.

Towards a trans-fats free future

The path towards a trans-fats free future lies in the hands of government, industry, and consumers. The government must implement and enforce strict regulations to reduce trans fat content in food products. The food industry must adopt healthier production practices and transparent labeling. Consumers must be educated about the risks of trans fats and encouraged to make healthier choices. By working together, we can eliminate trans fats from our diet and improve public health.

Call to enforce national iTFA standard for public health protection

There is a urgent call to enforce the national standard for industrially produced trans fats (iTFA) to protect public health. The standard, which limits trans fat content to a maximum of 2 percent, is a critical step towards reducing the health risks associated with trans fats. However, many food products in the market still exceed this limit. The government is urged to take immediate action to enforce the standard and ensure that all food products comply with the regulations.

Regulating industrial trans-fats

Regulation of industrial trans-fats must proceed without further delay

By Dr SM Ghufuran Saeed

The global battle against unhealthy fat, the World Health Organization has set another standard: industrially produced trans fats (ITFA) should not exceed 2 percent in our food. The urgency is underscored by the WHO's call for governments worldwide to eliminate trans-fats from global food supplies by 2023.

In Pakistan, adherence to these guidelines has been slow, with regulatory fluctuations and industry challenges making the process far from straightforward. In 2016, Pakistan had no specific regulations for ITFA. A 10 percent upper limit for trans-fat was set in 2017. While a step forward, it was alarmingly higher than the WHO's recommendation.

In 2020, the Punjab Food Authority banned partially hydrogenated oils and set a 0.5 percent limit. This was a significant leap towards safeguarding public health. However, the regulatory landscape remained inconsistent.

Authorities urge action to limit trans-fats in food

Authorities are urging action to limit trans-fats in food. Trans fats are commonly found in margarine, bakery goods, fried snacks, dairy products, and several other ultra-processed foods. While food manufacturers favour trans fats for their ability to enhance texture, shelf life, and flavour stability, the health costs far outweigh these benefits. Industrially produced trans-fats (ITFAs) have no known health benefits and significantly raise levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or 'bad' cholesterol while lowering high-density lipoprotein (HDL) or 'good' cholesterol.

The World Food Day, the TransForm Pakistan campaign partners including Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA), the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination, the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), and HIFEM, urged the government to take immediate action to limit industrially produced trans-fats to less than 2 per 100g of total fat in all food sources and completely eliminate partially hydrogenated oils.



The newspaper page features several news articles, including one about the regulation of trans fats. The article discusses the health risks of trans fats and the need for government action. It also mentions the TRANSFORM Pakistan Campaign and the call for a national standard for trans fats. The page is filled with text and images, providing a comprehensive overview of the issue.



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