



Pakistani Diaspora Leaders Impact Report 2020

Introduction

For the past four years, Common Purpose and the British Council have partnered to run leadership programmes for the Pakistani diaspora community in the UK.

The aim was to build the capacity of diaspora leaders from different generations, sectors, and backgrounds to have a greater impact both in Pakistan and in the diaspora community in the UK. Since launching the first Pakistani Diaspora Leadership Programme in 2015, we have run four programmes with an alumni community of 112 people from England, Scotland and Wales.

We attracted applications from people across the three nations and from a wide range of professions and disciplines. Always oversubscribed, we have received 246 applications over the four years.

The programmes, designed using the Common Purpose thought leadership of Leading Beyond Authority and the Innoventure process focused on the challenge:

‘How can we as diaspora leaders use our skills, knowledge and experience to benefit Pakistan and the diaspora community?’

To produce this report, we gathered assessment data from the individual programmes, interviewed alumni from across all the cohorts, and conducted a survey of the whole alumni group.

The power of gathering and developing a community of diaspora leaders was evident from this research.

The impacts that we observed fell into four broad areas:

1. Building bridges between the UK and Pakistan
2. Voice and confidence as diaspora leaders
3. Building leadership - more effective diaspora action
4. Amplifying diaspora initiatives – the multiplier effect

“Diaspora leaders are very important in building bridges between the UK and Pakistan, and they contribute a huge amount to communities in both countries. Through the Pakistani Diaspora Leaders programme, and our partnership with Common Purpose, we want to support them so that they can do even more.”

Mark Crossey, Deputy Country Director, British Council Pakistan



Overview

4 years
112 participants

37% Private sector
32% Public sector
31% NGO sector

52% Male
48% Female

Participants from:

- London
- Glasgow
- Manchester
- Birmingham
- Bradford
- Cardiff
- Leicester
- Cambridge
- Oxford
- Stirling
- Nottingham
- Leeds
- Sheffield

Some of their organizations:

- Birmingham City Council
- British Pakistan Foundation
- Deloitte UK
- CEMVO Scotland
- BBC
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Amnesty International
- Public Health England
- University of Sheffield
- Coutts & Co
- Swansea Council
- Met Police

Speakers from:

- Rangoonwala Foundation
- Aga Khan University
- WaterAid
- British Council
- Islamic Relief
- British Asian Trust
- BBC
- Muslim Aid
- DFID
- National Zakat Foundation
- Big Lottery
- Commonwealth Secretariat
- Penny Appeal

“Common Purpose gives you the tools to reflect and stay focused, encourage wild ideas, think outside the box and challenge your own stereotypes.”

Riaz Hassan, Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator, Swansea Council, Participant – 2018 Programme

“I have never had the power of such a network available to me in one place at one time from so many different disciplines. It has enabled me to build alliances with people I would never had been able to before .”

Syed Hussain, Detective Chief Inspector, Metropolitan Police, Participant – 2019 Programme

“What a wonderful space for thought, connections and real purpose. The intangible is set to make way for the tangible.”

Shazia Nizam, Creative Director and Founder, My Kolachi, Participant – 2015 Programme

Impact

The results of the survey of the alumni group are as follows:

Statement	Agreement*
As a result of the programme I am collaborating with other members of the diaspora community	93%
The programme has increased my ability to build bridges between the UK and Pakistan	82%
As a result of the programme I am more confident in my voice as a diaspora leader	89%
I am working on a project or idea that will benefit the UK	89%
I am working on a project or idea that will benefit Pakistan	89%

*the percentage of respondents that agreed and strongly agreed with the statement

In 2017 and 2018*

89%

said they are better able to spot common ground and make connections between people

91%

said they are better able to lead or operate within a diverse team

90%

said they would recommend the programme to another person

In 2019*

86%

felt they had reconnected to their purpose as a result of the programme

89%

said the diaspora network will help them to make a more positive contribution to their diaspora and/or country of heritage

86%

recognized that they could be a bridge builder

*the percentage of participants that agreed or strongly agreed with the statement

Building bridges between the UK and Pakistan



Diaspora leaders are often natural interpreters and are constantly moving between worlds. They have the potential to become important bridge builders, both between the UK and Pakistan, and within communities in the UK.

By bringing together and forming a community of Pakistani diaspora leaders our proposition was that we could help them to fulfil that bridge building promise. The aim was to increase the impact of their projects, campaigns and collaborations and encourage their input into policy and strategy.

As a result of the programmes we have seen alumni building more effective relations between the UK and Pakistan, and working together in the UK to cross divides.

Riaz Hassan, a participant from the 2018 programme, cites the alumni network as being a “crucial resource” that he would never have found outside the programme. He mobilized the diaspora behind a major initiative launched by the Government of Pakistan called ‘Empower Pakistan’, which aims to develop entrepreneurship amongst young people in the country.

“The networking opportunities with like-minded people has helped me tremendously to engage alumni in different projects both here and in Pakistan. A number of the diaspora leaders are now assisting me with the ‘Empower Pakistan’ initiative, where they will be providing mentoring to young people in Pakistan. The wider alumni group has played a significant role towards the delivery of the ‘Empower Pakistan’ initiative. They are now becoming a helping hand and a crucial resource which I would have struggled to find had there not been the Common Purpose initiative in the UK.”

Riaz Hassan, Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator (Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend), Swansea Council, Participant – 2018 Programme

Voice and confidence as diaspora leaders



89%

said as a result of the programme they were more confident in their voice as a diaspora leader.

The programmes articulated, very explicitly, the potential role that diaspora leaders can play both in the UK and Pakistan. Interaction with speakers from other diaspora communities was key in demonstrating the potential power of the diaspora leaders voice and perspective. We saw a huge increase in the participants' confidence in their role and voice as diaspora leaders.

“Through collaboration with other members of the diaspora community on the programme, I am in the process of setting up a new social enterprise around mental health and overcoming the taboo around it.

“The programme opened up networks and connections, helped grow my aspirations and gave me more confidence in my voice as a diaspora leader. The support of the diaspora, which I didn't have before, gave me the confidence to take a programme to Pakistan.”

Adil Javed, Director and Operations Manager, Alchemy Arts, Participant – 2018 Programme

“Attending the programme has given me more authority – I am now looking at opportunities for where I can lead, while before I would not necessarily have stepped forward. It has affirmed that I am a leader and it's given me the confidence to practically carry it through.

“I am also more confident in my voice as a diaspora leader. My unofficial community work has given me a better insight into what matters in Pakistan, the reality from lived experience of people on the ground, in the diaspora and people in Pakistan. I now have more confidence in my voice and to speak out on issues.”

Nusrat Ahmed, Community Gallery Producer, Manchester Museum, Participant – 2019 Programme

Building leadership - more effective diaspora action

The Common Purpose thought leadership of Leading Beyond Authority (LBA) is highly relevant for diaspora leaders.

They rarely have a formal position which gives them the ‘authority’ to take action. They need to influence, persuade and gather coalitions of support.

We have seen how LBA – the ability to lead in situations where you don’t have formal authority – has helped the participants, even those who are established leaders, to be more effective.



“An important benefit for me was the leadership development – Leading Beyond Authority helped me to understand how to better run a team of volunteers who could deliver on our charity UPSIGN’s objectives, and make the workshops we planned to run in Pakistan a success. The workshops, led by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in partnership with the UPSIGN Network, brought together 140 academics from the UK and Pakistan to focus on development challenges in Pakistan.”

“The techniques that Common Purpose used to develop new initiatives on the diaspora leaders programme were adapted to suit the workshop in Pakistan. It was a massive hit with participants and gave a creative way to develop transdisciplinary ideas. They were keen to use the approach for future learning.”

“The benefits of the diaspora leaders programme have continued long beyond the programme itself.”

Jawwad Darr, Professor & Vice Dean of Enterprise (MAPS faculty), University College London, Participant – 2018 Programme

Amplifying diaspora initiatives – the multiplier effect

Alumni reported that they are doing much more than they were before the programme. The vibrancy of the alumni community, the interchange of ideas and the confidence the programme has engendered have all contributed to a 'multiplier effect'. The alumni are doing more and supporting one another's efforts. As one person put it, *'I was doing things before but that has increased ten-fold'*.



"Having experienced the Pakistani Diaspora Leaders programme myself, I was excited to join the Advisory Group, sharing my skills and experience with the team. There is nothing else like this out there for our community – the programme provides such a fantastic learning opportunity. They bring together such a diverse group of great minds in a non-partisan, non-political space, to work together on ideas that will benefit the community in the UK; and help to tackle the development challenges in Pakistan."

Suniya Qureshi, Member – Pakistani Diaspora Leaders Advisory Group

"Through the Common Purpose network, there are different networks and people that I have been introduced to, who have helped me play a bigger role in the diaspora community."

"The leadership skills I learnt on the course, and have since tried to develop, helped me when I co-launched the Women in Global Health Pakistan Chapter in Islamabad last year."

"In addition, I am part of two different UK-based Pakistan-related projects that have arisen as a result of being part of the diaspora network; one on mental health and arts, and the other on Pakistan 2020."

Samia Latif, Consultant of Communicable Disease Control, Public Health England (PHE), Participant – 2018 Programme

Emb's story: Turning ideas into action



In 2017, I made a short social media film called Rising Girl that shed light on how difficult life is for girls in Pakistan who want to go to school. The film led me to set up the charity, Rising Girl, where we help to educate girls in the UK and soon Pakistan.

When I started Rising Girl, I had minimal experience of being a leader. As a journalist, my profession doesn't give me a lot of opportunities to lead as you would in an organization or business – it's a different type of leadership and skill set. Through the Pakistani Diaspora programme, I found the confidence and learned new ways to become a progressive leader but also how to adapt my skills and make sure my voice is heard and respected.

Learning from other diaspora leaders

I shared my struggles as a new diaspora leader during our learning group discussions on the programme. The diversity of the participants in the group – doctors, entrepreneurs, public servants, psychologists, to name a few – gave me fresh perspectives on how to navigate the challenges of being a new and different type of

leader. They shared their own leadership journey, which helped me to set attainable goals for myself – such as developing a 12 and 24 month sustainability plan.

Leaning in to our diaspora network

The network I gained from the programme and the wider Pakistani diaspora alumni is invaluable.

If it weren't for the programme, I would never have met Shumaila Dar, who is now the Vice Chair for Rising Girl. Shumaila has over fifteen years of policy experience in both central and local government, working on a range of policies, including education, youth violence, economic development and regeneration.

Through the Common Purpose diaspora network, I also met Faraz Khan, a seed funder based in Pakistan. Faraz and other leaders like him have been instrumental in helping Rising Girl move forward.

Social entrepreneurship

Because of the diaspora programme, I was inspired to apply for another leadership programme for social entrepreneurs.

For the longest time, I have had an idea to start a sustainable, ethical chocolate brand that will help girls and women in Pakistan. When I finally developed the recipe, which took two years, I was too scared to make the leap. This year, I made that leap by getting in to a competitive twelve month programme for the School of Social Entrepreneurs. I am now on the verge of getting my first order from a retailer.

The Pakistani Diaspora Leaders Programme helped me find my voice and gain confidence as a diaspora leader. It gave me access to the wider Pakistani diaspora community and inspired me to do more within that community.

Emb Hashmi is an award-winning journalist who works for the BBC. She is also an ambassador for the She Awards that recognize and reward inspirational women. She has been featured in 100 Women Stories to uplift, empower and inspire. She has also developed a response to Covid-19 for Rising Girl and is working with the Birmingham Education Partnership to get used laptops donated to disadvantaged girls who cannot get online to continue their education as schools are closed.

Hamza's story: Making an impact in Pakistan

The programme gave me a real support network. Five years after it ended, we are still in touch and regularly talking to each other. We discuss everything and anything. We bounce ideas off of each other. The network gives me comfort knowing that I am not alone in this, that there are other leaders who are grappling with the same challenges that I'm struggling with.

I have met several participants from the programme who are actively engaged and doing brilliant work in Pakistan. They are mobilizing their networks including APPNE, UpSign and PAGE to name a few, both in the UK and Pakistan. They're motivated, they're delivering. It is powerful to see individuals who are each doing their own projects, on their own time, using their resources, to contribute to our country.

After the programme, I think that most of the participants, like me, felt a lot more confident in being a diaspora leader. I realized how important it was to stand up as a leader. As a result, I became more persistent and organized in the different community projects I was leading on.

Aviation Training Hub in Pakistan

We started the Aviation Training Hub to help Pakistanis and overseas Pakistanis become locally and globally employable in aircraft maintenance. Currently, we have 3 campuses in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad. The students of the Aviation Training Hub comprises of local Pakistanis but is expanding to include Pakistani diaspora from the Middle East by 2021.

Last year was tough for the organization because we came to a point where we were on the verge of closing everything down. In order to bounce back, we had to start again from scratch. As a leader, I knew that I couldn't give up on this. I understand that I am the bridge between the organization, the diaspora community and Pakistan.

Hamza is Head of Data Privacy at KPMG and a keen technologist. He's an advisor to multiple start-ups, both in the UK and in Pakistan, and is also a trustee of The Breaking Bread Trust which is focused on alleviating food poverty in the London Borough of Harrow.



I decided to reach out across the diaspora network to talk to people who were on a similar path and could give me the advice I needed to take a strong proposition to the government in Pakistan. As a result of that support and advice, in the space of six months, we were not only able to resurrect the company but we had expanded our operations, opening new offices and connecting with a German counterpart. Furthermore, we have been approved by the National Technology Council to launch a new degree in Aviation Maintenance this fall.

The programme gave me access to leaders who could help with know-how and advice when the situation in Pakistan became very challenging, and the exposure to the senior leaders (who came to speak on the programme) gave me the confidence to connect and collaborate within the Pakistan context at the government level.

I believe that the diaspora community has a huge amount of latent power and influence that can help Pakistan make great strides as a nation. If the diaspora community is mobilized correctly, they would be able to greatly contribute to the community and to their country.

Zana's story: A springboard into confidence and competence



What the programme and Common Purpose gave me was a springboard into competence and confidence. Speaking to other leaders helped to validate the qualities and skills that make me a strong leader, which I had a hard time believing in the past. That confidence has propelled me to do more within the community and my professional career.

After the programme I applied for a highly competitive civil service leadership programme, a year-long course for high potential leaders in the UK. I was accepted from among thousands who applied. I am now a school governor for Brampton Manor Academy, an 11-18 mixed state school in a disadvantaged area in London. In 2019, 41 of its students were offered Oxbridge places.

I gained five life-long friends from the 2017 Pakistani Diaspora Leaders Programme. Our group, consisting of female diaspora leaders from across sectors, has become inseparable.

We support each other both in our personal life and professional careers.

The five of us are all deeply involved in Pakistan in one way or another so we know what it's like working in this field. It can be quite a man's world, and with that comes a lot of gender bias.

This support network of female leaders has given all of us a sounding board to share our challenges as women in a male-dominated world. Personally, it gives me comfort knowing that I am not alone in this.

When it comes to doing work in Pakistan, there's a level of excitement and drive from each of the leaders in our cohort. There are so many people helping our country in a lot of different sectors. Because you speak to so many different leaders during the programme, you get a clearer picture. You begin to see where you fit in all of this. You get more clarity in your vision.

The network we created from the programme is really empowering. It's also a testament to the quality of people that Common Purpose has chosen to be part of the programme. Our cohort was such a diverse crowd of people from different socio-economic backgrounds, geographies and dialects and those differences further enrich the relationships. You would never have had a network like this convened anywhere else.

Zana is a civil servant with 18 years of experience in training, analysis, programme management and strategy. Zana has spent the last four years working in Islamabad, Jordan and India, leading economic reform programmes, and is currently on a short career break.

Conclusion

The Pakistani Diaspora Leaders programme is unique. There is no other initiative that seeks to bring together established and potential leaders from across the British Pakistani community, with the aim of developing their leadership, and supporting them to make a bigger and more powerful contribution as civic leaders both in the UK and in Pakistan.

Why support the leadership development of British Pakistani diaspora leaders?

For the UK – the UK is home to the largest Pakistani community in Europe, with the population of British Pakistanis exceeding 1.17 million (based on the 2011 census). British Pakistanis are the second-largest ethnic minority population in the UK and make up the second-largest sub-group of British Asians. It is in the interests of the UK to support and encourage British Pakistanis to take their place as leaders in cities and communities across the country.

For Pakistan – the UK diaspora is one of the largest overseas Pakistani communities. Many are keen to contribute to development in Pakistan and are prepared to share their time, resources and skills. They bring knowledge, expertise, cultural understanding and long-term commitment.

89% of the diaspora programme alumni said that the diaspora network will help them to make a more positive contribution to their diaspora and/or country of heritage

Pakistani Diaspora Leaders are also philanthropists, according to a recent report by the British Council and the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy it is estimated that the total volume of philanthropic giving in the form of monetary, in-kind and time volunteered by the Pakistani Diaspora in the UK is £1.25 billion a year – of which £0.7 billion goes to Pakistan and £0.6 billion is donated in the UK. This is in addition to the enormous contribution that they make in remittances.

Conclusion cont..

What have we learned?

The main findings from our experience of running the programmes, and from the feedback are that:

- There is **strong demand** for the programme – we were able to offer places to less than half of the applicants (246 people applied over the 4 years for the 112 places). Now that the programme is established and has built a reputation, we see the demand increasing with both the number and calibre of applications going up
- The Common Purpose thought leadership on Cross Boundary Leadership (comprising Leading Beyond Authority and Cultural Intelligence) are highly relevant to the leadership challenges faced by the participants and are instrumental in **helping them to tackle those challenges**
- The community that is being built through the programme is **increasing the social capital** of the participants – they repeatedly mention the support, advice, and know-how that the network has afforded them, and how this has helped them to further their ideas and projects both in the UK community and in Pakistan
- They have significantly **grown in confidence**. 89% said that as a result of the programme they were more confident in their voice as a diaspora leader. This manifests itself in a number of different ways:
 - Motivation to step forward and put forward their perspective as a diaspora leader
 - The courage to launch an idea or new initiative
 - Taking on leadership roles that they would not have done before the programme

This gain in confidence is particularly marked amongst some of the younger women leaders

- The alumni see themselves as **bridge builders between the UK and Pakistan** – 82% said that the programme had increased their ability to build bridges between the two countries
- The programme has had a **multiplier effect** – amplifying existing initiatives and launching new ones. Alumni are supporting one another and building on each other's work.



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