

Woman Rising and Shifting Mind-sets in Construction Services Industry

Through the Humqadam-School Construction and Rehabilitation Programme (SCRP), UK aid is enabling women to shatter the glass ceiling in the construction service industry in Pakistan.

Founded in 2007, Smartek is a start-up construction company owned by Ms. Shahrukh Khan. Like many other start-ups, Shahrukh has faced setbacks, which in Pakistan includes the battle of discrimination and prevalent gender barriers in the construction service industry.

Founded in 2007, Smartek is a start-up construction company owned by Ms. Shahrukh Khan. In 2015, when Humqadam-SCRP invited construction companies from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab province to bid, Smartek was awarded a contract to construct 83 new classrooms and 59 toilets in seven schools in the Punjab province. Shahrukh's company was able to deliver quality services ahead of time. The final product of the school building is a credit to both Humqadam-SCRP portfolio, as well as Smartek's. High standards of services further made it possible for Shahrukh's company to win another contract. More recently in 2017, Smartek has been awarded contract for construction of nine more schools in Punjab.



New academic block having 11 new classrooms and 11 toilets at Government Higher Secondary School Khudian Khas, District Kasur in Punjab province constructed by SmarTek.
Photo credits: Syed M Abdullah Hameed / Humqadam

Working with Humqadam-SCRP, Smartak has been able to upgrade their Contractor Category license in Pakistan Engineering Council. Shahrukh appreciates the efforts of Humqadam-SCRP in her success.



“Thank you Humqadam-SCRP for acknowledging my work. It has enabled me to establish SmarTek in Pakistan’s construction service industry. I hope my struggle will pave the way in dispelling gender stereotypes and will also open up opportunities for more girls.” - Ms. Shahrukh Khan is CEO, SmarTek (a construction company)

Humqadam-SCRP is the largest UK Aid infrastructure programme in the world. With an aim to improve infrastructure in government schools in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan, Humqadam-SCRP has constructed **1,151** new classrooms and rehabilitated **881** classrooms in **392** schools (as of October 2017). This programme is a part of the **£420** million [Punjab Education Support Programme \(PESP\) II](#) and the **£283** million [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Programme \(KESP\)](#), large and ambitious programmes which represent a collaborative effort between DFID, Australian Government (contribution in KP province only), and the provincial governments to result in more children in school and better learning outcomes.