



# 2016 UPDATE



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**Usra Shaukat** | Pakistan

BA | Asian University for Women, Bangladesh

**“I want to meet people from different backgrounds so I can develop new perspectives and share these with young girls in my community, so that they feel more empowered to pursue higher education”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

## OUR UNIQUENESS

Women are incredibly important proponents of change, especially in developing nations. Though we live in a relatively progressive society in North America, women around the world face discrimination and are not granted adequate access to food, clean water, health care, education or basic human rights. By supporting and educating young women in the Global South, particularly in areas of conflict and remote areas, we can allviate the plight of societies in these under-privileged areas.

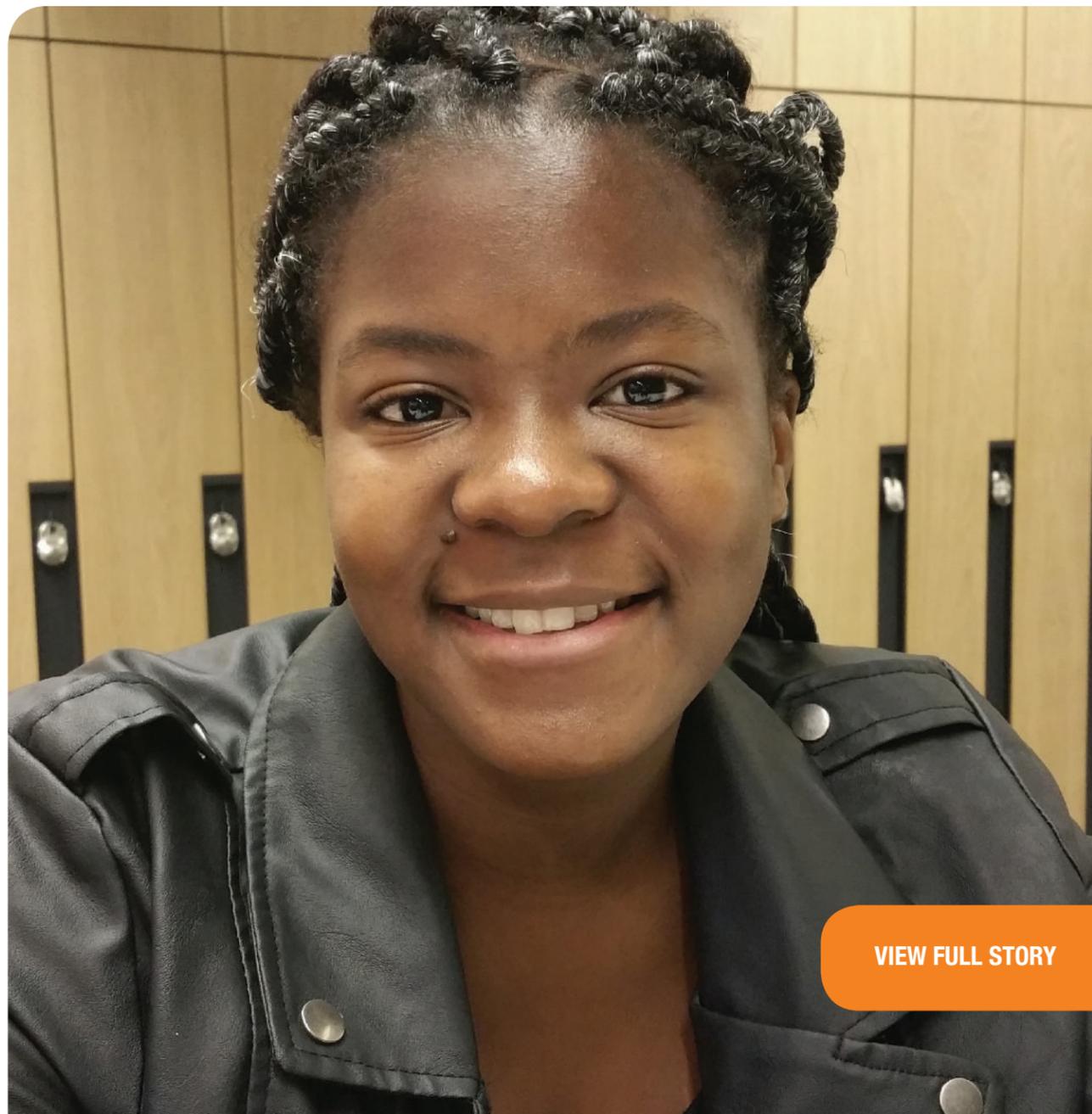
We focus on developing brave and intelligent women leaders who can, in turn, lift the women in their communities out of the cycle of discrimination and poverty. Our team provides strong on-ground assistance in the selection, screening, and support of all our students. To assist in creating strong, committed young women, our involvement begins before university and continues during and after the student’s university education.

Our Foundation is also unique in that the financial support we receive from our on-ground partners and university affiliates allows us to leverage our donors’ contributions at a ratio of 1:6. Our university partnerships and generous donors provide us with access to full scholarships at the Bachelor’s, Master’s, professional and Doctorate levels around the world.

Joanna Kidde | Uganda

BEng | University of Calgary

**“As a skilled civil engineer, I will promote the training of women by providing jobs that will help improve their skills in S.T.E.M. Educating women in construction will make a large community impact in my country.”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

## CHAIR REPORT



In December 2015, I was honoured to be asked to Chair the Board of the Spark of Hope Foundation. What attracted me to the organization was its focus on fulfilling an unmet need: providing university education to women from the developing world, in order to create the next generation of female leaders and role models. What also excited me were the incredible partnerships that the Foundation had already forged, providing the opportunity to create an outsized impact over the next decade.

My first task was to help transition the Board from its founding members, to whom the Foundation will always be indebted for their support and wisdom, to a new Board. In 2016, we were pleased to welcome new Board members: Lesley Gouldie, Hassan Shaikh, Diamond Lalani, and Sadia Zaman. They bring fresh perspectives and new strengths to the Board. I am also pleased to share some key highlights.

In June 2015, we were delighted to host the Women as Architects of Change series at the Aga Khan Museum with Susan Ormiston from the CBC, who was our keynote speaker. In October 2015, videographer Tara Sutton was the keynote speaker at an awareness dinner. We will be launching this series across Canada over the next 12 to 18 months.

We supported the establishment of the Spark of Hope Foundation (USA) to help create greater awareness and increase our fund-raising and partner possibilities. We are thrilled to welcome Karim H. Ismail as the Chair of the USA Board. His intimate knowledge of the work of the Spark of Hope Foundation since its inception will be key to shaping our sister organization.

Our Founder and CEO, Narmin K. Ismail, received the prestigious RBC Canadian Immigrant Award on June 21, 2016. This is a well-deserved achievement for an inspirational woman who has devoted so much of her time to the betterment of women around the globe.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Narmin and all our donors and volunteers for their excellent work. We look forward to continuing to grow The Spark of Hope Foundation.

Doug Lawson, CPA  
Chair of the Board

**Guljahon Ruzadorova** | Tajikistan

BA | Wartburg College, USA

**“I want to start a business in Tajikistan that will have a significant social impact. Being able to undertake business studies in the USA is a dream come true.”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

## CEO REPORT



Three years ago, in April 2014, I made the boldest decision of my life in founding a scholarship foundation. I had two things going for me: a passionate belief in the importance of helping create the next generation of women leaders in the developing world; and the total commitment of my spouse to work by my side through this daunting challenge.

The decision was bold because I had no funds, no board, no university partnerships, no on-ground partners, no students, and no charitable status. To compound the challenge, we decided to focus on providing opportunities to students from remote areas of the world, from conflict ridden areas, and from refugee camps.

My founding board established a success benchmark: support 25 students, primarily at the undergraduate level, by September 2017.

I am overjoyed to share that we already support 75 brilliant female students, from 15 countries studying at 30 universities, at the Bachelor's, Master's, professional and PhD levels, with 23 alumnae. We hope to hit the 100-student mark by September 2017. Furthermore, we have created the capacity to fully support the university education of 1,500 women over the next 10 years, with \$120M in contingent funding committed or identified out of the \$150M required.

I have been awed at the courage of our scholars as they pursue their dream of a post-secondary education in order to to make a meaningful difference in the world. We anticipate that each of these 1,500 women will impact at least 10,000 people in their lives.

We are extremely grateful and consistently humbled by the incredible generosity of our donors, volunteers, university partners and supporters. They should be very proud of the lives and families and communities they are changing.

Our first three years have seen remarkable growth, and I am proud to share the achievements of our wonderful team in the following pages. I hope you will consider joining us in whatever way you can on this amazing journey!

Narmin K. Ismail, MBA  
Founder and CEO

## KEY NUMBERS

75

Students supported (52 current students, 23 Alumnae)

30

Universities attended  
(Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South America, UK)

26

Students at the Master's level

22

Students in S.T.E.M. fields

15

Countries of origin:  
Argentina, Cameroon, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic,  
Lebanon (refugee camps), Liberia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan,  
Palestine, Syria, Tajikistan and Uganda

14

Students pursuing medical studies

6X

Multipler effect for every donor dollar contributed,  
thanks to the generosity of partners

4

PhD students, studying international public law,  
globalization and international economic law, mobility and  
transport, and forest sciences

Azernoosh Bazrafkan | Iran

PhD, International Law | University of Antwerp, Holland

**“I want to explore the link between international investment agreements and good governance reform in developing countries to determine whether countries derive socio-economic benefits from such agreements”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

# DONOR SUPPORT

Through the tremendous efforts of our Board, partners, and dedicated volunteers, we are able to make your donations go even further, giving each dollar an exponential impact! For every dollar donated to the Foundation, these donations are multiplied at least **six times**.

Our Transform50X Campaign has resulted in 23 Benefactor-level gifts. Each of these commitments represents financial support for one student for four years of post-secondary education. We are excited to be almost halfway to our target of 50 Benefactors. To express our appreciation, each of these Benefactors is entitled to have a scholarship provided in their name, in their family’s name or in the name of a loved one.

In response to donor requests, we have created two additional Benefactor programs. Please click on the logos below to learn more.

Transform**50**<sup>x</sup> **SUPPORT STUDENTS FOR ANY PROGRAM**



**SUPPORT STUDENTS IN A S.T.E.M. PROGRAM**

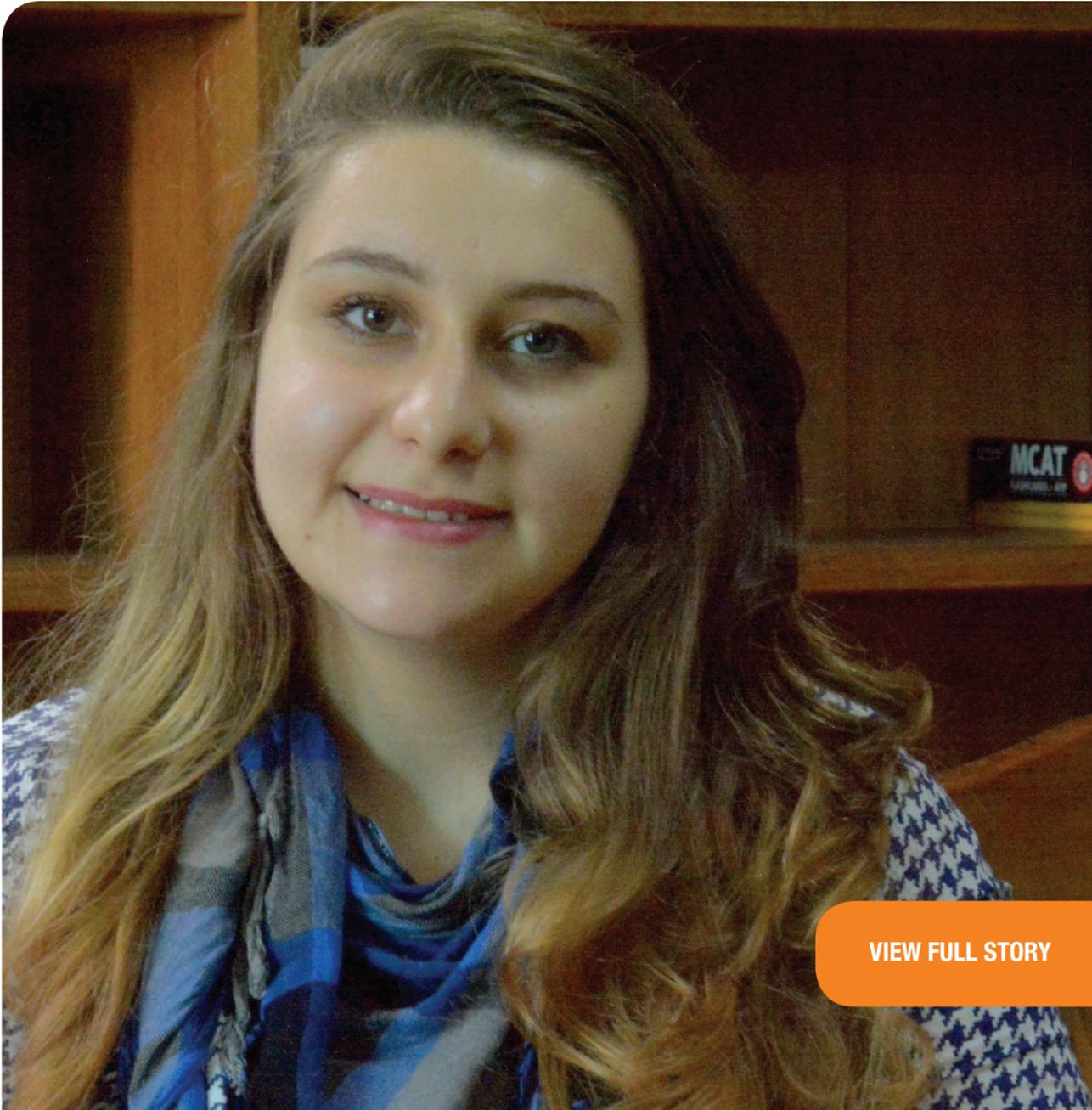


**SUPPORT STUDENTS WISHING TO UNDERTAKE A PHD**

May Alherek | Syria

BA, Environmental Sciences | Asian University for Women, Bangladesh

“I’d like to replace the current polluting power sources with clean energy that never runs out like solar, wind and wave power, and raise awareness of the dangers facing our earth”



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

# SPARKONE CAMPAIGN

In the fourth quarter of 2016, we were excited to launch the SparkOne Campaign. The goal of this campaign is to gain the monthly support of 1,000 Ambassadors with a commitment of \$1 per day towards scholarships for our students’ post-secondary education.

As with all donations to the Foundation, SparkOne contributions are multiplied **six times** through contributions from universities and other partners, and they are also tax deductible in Canada and the United States.



is all it takes.

## Are you in?

[Let’s make it happen](#)

SparkOne™

# UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED



# UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS

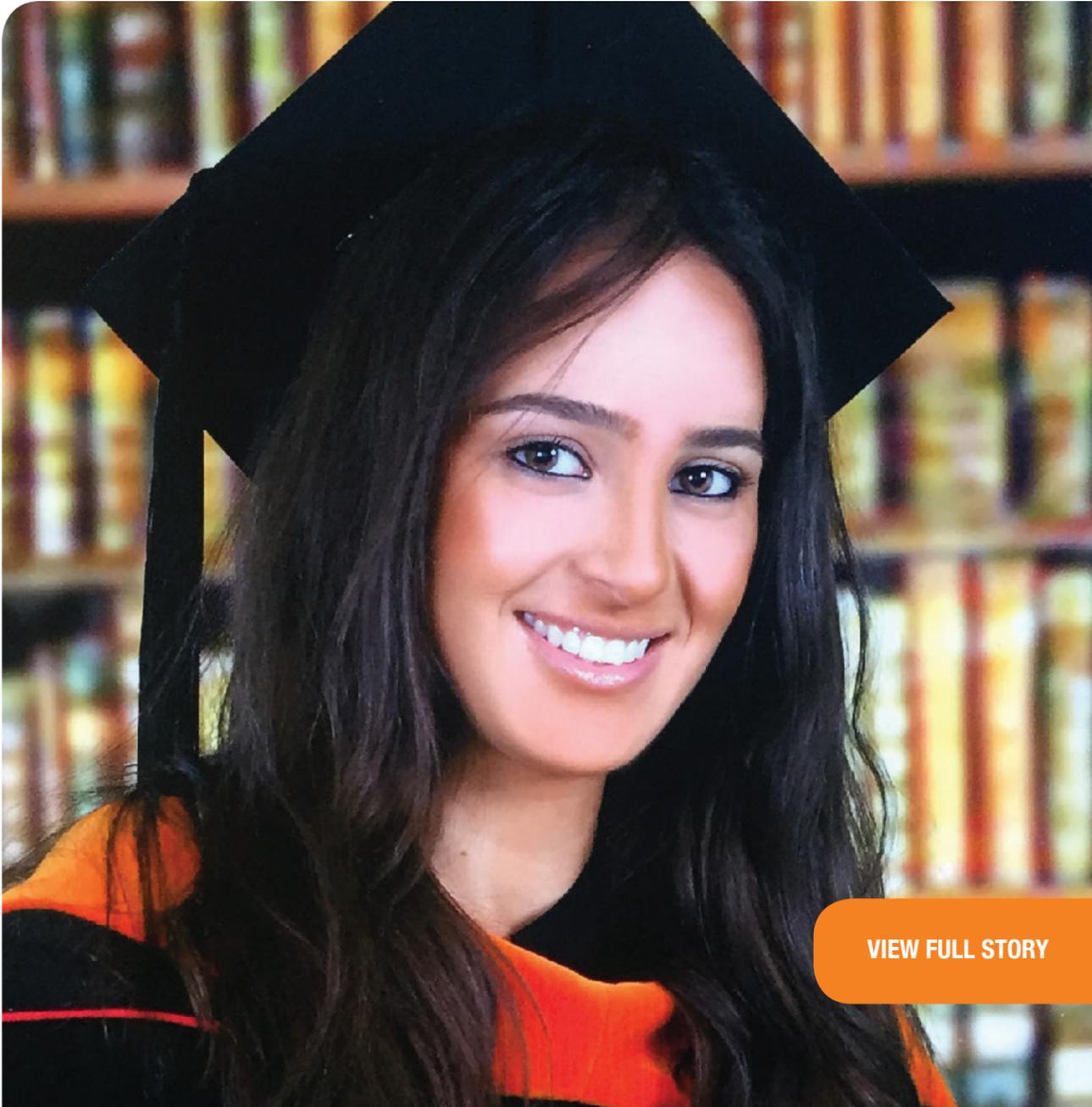
We could not have achieved the impact we have in such a short time without the incredible partnerships we have built with prestigious universities around the world. We are extremely gratified to know that our partners believe as strongly as we do in our work and accomplishments.

We have both formal and informal agreements with the 30 universities that The Spark of Hope Foundation students attend. We would like to express our sincere appreciation for their continued support. Without these collaborative arrangements, we would not be able to multiply our donor impact at a ratio of 1:6. These agreements allow us to serve many more students collaboratively than we ever could alone. We continue to pursue partnerships with other top universities in Canada and around the world. There is strength in numbers and working together allows us to achieve more than we ever thought possible.

Israa Issa | Lebanon

Masters in Applied Sciences | Carleton University, Canada

**“After I finish my Master’s degree, I see myself working in sustainability projects, hopefully with a company like Tesla, to build more sustainable and greener homes, businesses and schools”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

# ON THE GROUND

Our on-ground partners play a critical role in identifying and short-listing the bright female students we support. These partners also play a key role in assisting our students with the various arrangements required before departing for their university studies, which are generally outside the student’s country of origin. On-ground partners also provide ongoing support while our students attend university, which is crucial to the successful completion of their studies.



AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY (AKU) AND AKU-IED



DOCTORS FOR DOCTORS – NICARAGUA/CANADA



MILKY WAY FOUNDATION – PAKISTAN



UNITED LEBANON YOUTH PROJECT – LEBANON

**Jodi-Ann Smith** | Jamaica

MBA | University of British Columbia, Canada

**“I want to create a media empire that is a platform for women to be inspired; I’d also like to start a scholarship in my country to provide female students with access to great education and opportunities.”**

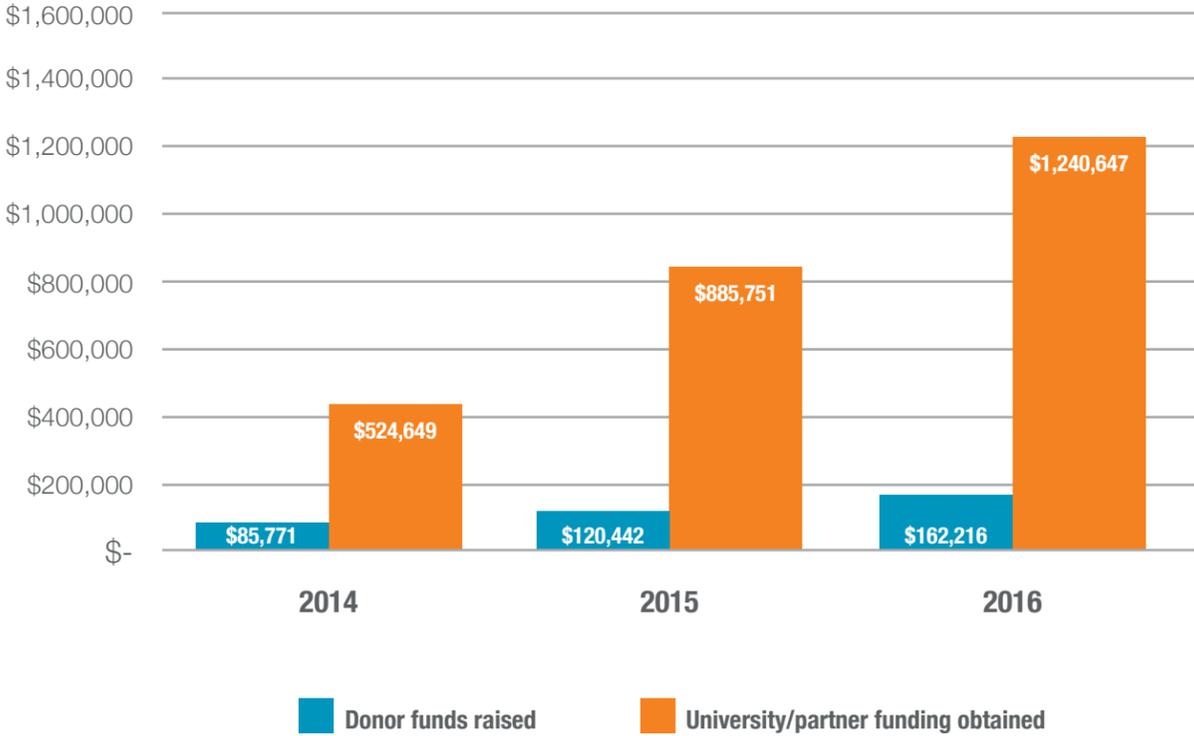


[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

# REVENUES AND COSTS

Our annual revenues, raised through donor contributions, are allocated primarily to scholarships to help support our students. We are pleased to report that we have been able to decrease our program management, evaluation, marketing, and reporting costs from 16% of funding received in 2014 to only 9% of funding received in 2016.

We are delighted with the efficiencies we have been able to achieve with the combined expertise of our Board and the partnerships we have developed. The support of our talented volunteers is of paramount importance in decreasing our costs.

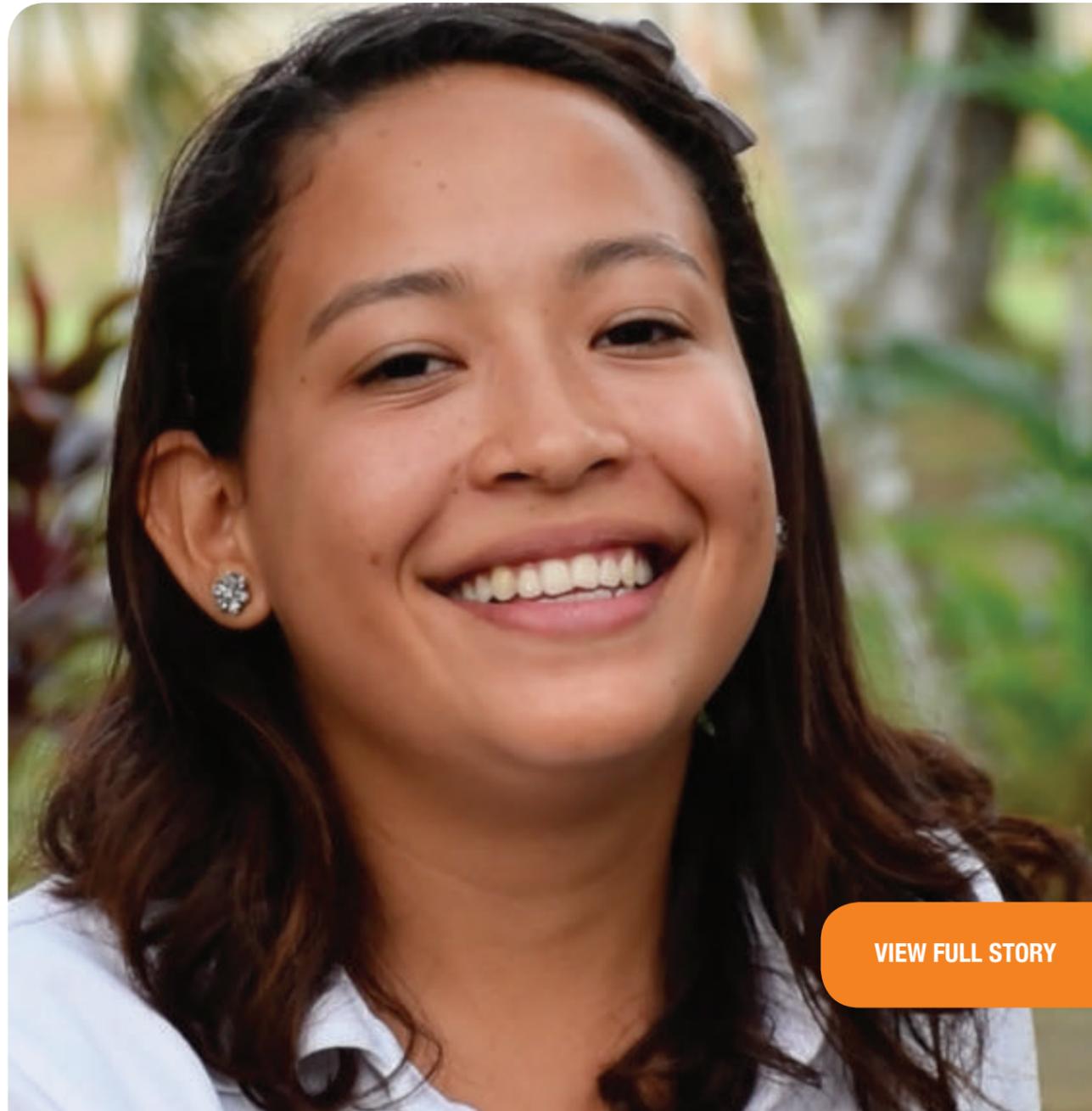


PROGRAM MGMT. AS % OF TOTAL COSTS	2014	2015	2016
	16%	12%	9%

**Cindy Veliz** | Nicaragua

MD | UCAN Managua, Nicaragua

**“My community has little medical presence. As a doctor, I want to be one of the people that can be a blessing to all these people, and bring them the best medicine in the world, with love and kindness.”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

## MAKING AN IMPACT

One of the most important keys to our success has been to make every dollar contributed to the Foundation go just a little bit further. We are able to ensure that each dollar donated gets multiplied at least six times through the funding and support of the universities we work with as well as other partners!

Though we are extremely proud of the efficiencies we have established, we still recognize that the BIGGEST impact of donations is the exponential transformation of the young women we support. These women will become leaders in their communities and around the world through their work as doctors, engineers, journalists, lawyers, managers, scientists, teachers and more. They will also have an important impact on generations to come as they become role models in their communities.

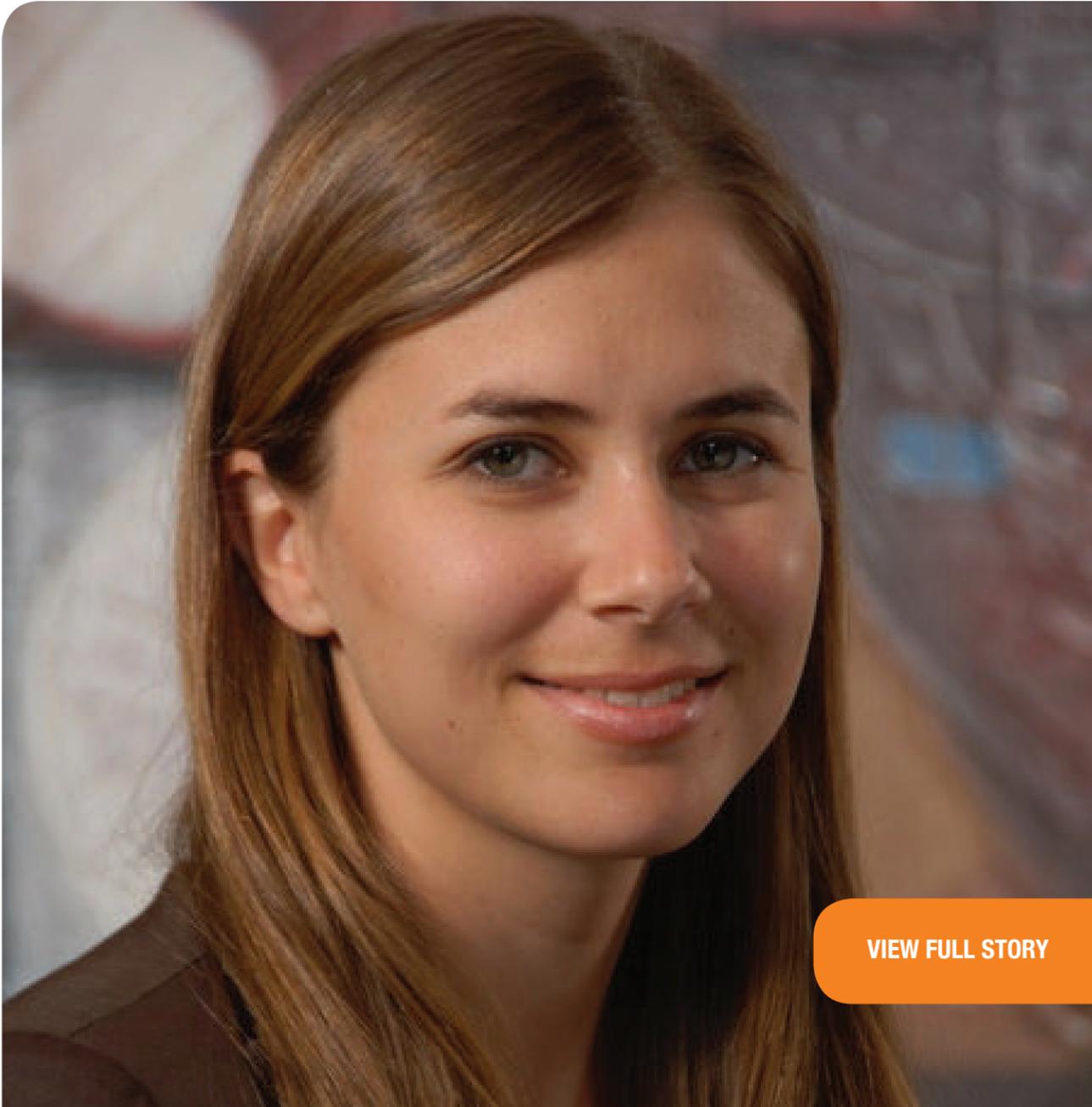
There are many ways you can get involved and help make a transformative impact for our students:

- a) **BECOME A BENEFACTOR** – [www.thesparkofhope.org/transform50x](http://www.thesparkofhope.org/transform50x)
- b) **SUPPORT ONE OF OUR CAMPAIGNS** – [www.thesparkofhope.org/donate](http://www.thesparkofhope.org/donate)
- c) **VOLUNTEER** – [www.thesparkofhope.org/volunteer](http://www.thesparkofhope.org/volunteer)

**Lucia Satragano** | Argentina

PhD. Monetary models | University of Bern, Switzerland

**“I am hopeful that my research can provide a banking model to help prevent future world recessions. This will provide greater financial security for people around the world.”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

# OUR VISION

Our goal over the next 10 years is to build capacity to develop 1,500 young women leaders through post-secondary and graduate education.

**We would like your support to help make their dreams come true**



# BOARD MEMBERS



## **DOUG LAWSON (CHAIR)**

Doug's 35 years of senior business and financial management experience across a diverse range of industries and size of businesses including brings strong business and financial planning experience to the Foundation. In addition, Doug brings strong board management experience, coupled with an ICD.D certification granted by The Institute of Corporate Directors.



## **DIAMOND LALANI**

Diamond's consulting and training experience consists of a wide range of business operations both in Canada and around the world, which allows him to provide valuable direction for the organization's operations. Diamond's community leadership and youth mentorship in education and career planning guides his recommendations to the Board.



## **LESLEY GOULDIE**

Lesley's understanding of the biotech, healthcare and education sectors brings a valued perspective to our Board as we help our students navigate these challenging industries. With an in-depth knowledge of vertically integrated environments and strategic decision-making, Lesley is able to guide our Board towards solutions that are customized for the unique environment we operate within. As the former CEO of Studentawards Inc., Lesley has intimate knowledge of the steps students take to secure scholarship information and funding.



## **HASSAN SHAIKH**

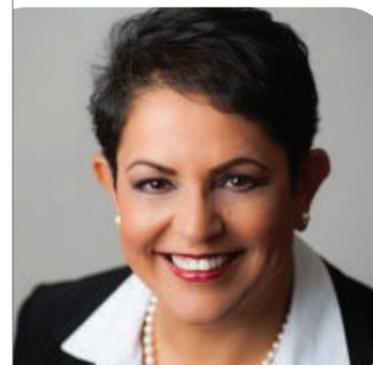
Hassan has broad experience in the financial sector and first-hand experience supporting women in the developing world. His experience providing micro credit and his firm belief in the power of education allows him to bring an important perspective to our Board.



## **SADIA ZAMAN**

Sadia's career has been dedicated to media, cultural industries, and not-for-profits with a particular focus on women in film and television. Her unique perspective on diversity, gender, and leadership issues allows her to help our Board focus on the plight of the inspiring women we support on a daily basis.

# FOUNDER & CEO



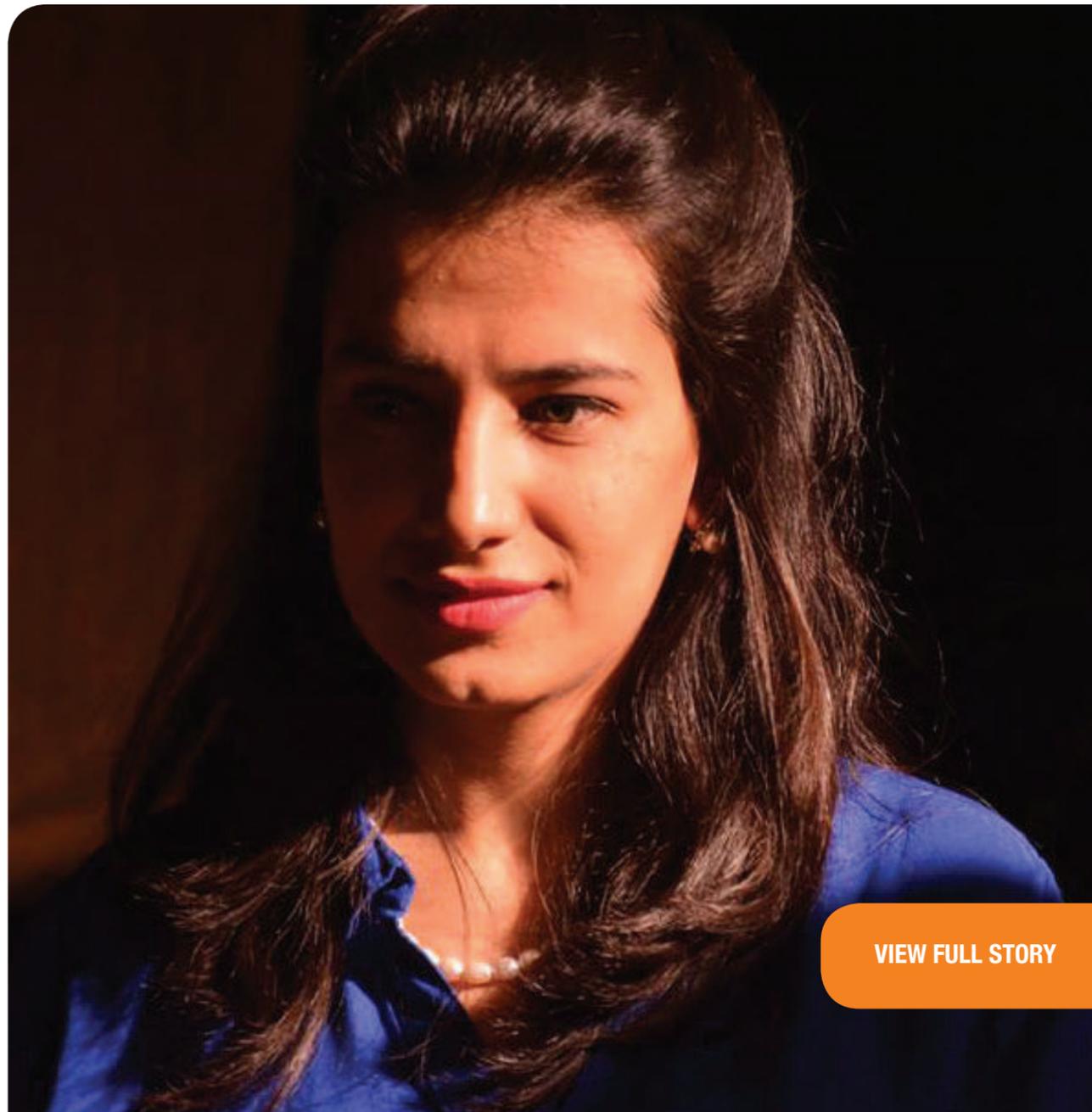
## **NARMIN ISMAIL**

Narmin was the Founder and Vice President of the Eighty20 Group, Co-Founder of the Climb for Leaders and was previously the CEO of the Daughters for Life Foundation. Her passion lies in empowering young women from the developing world through education, which is what led her to establish The Spark of Hope Foundation.

**Seema Ali** | Pakistan

BA | Asian University for Women, Bangladesh

**“I’d like to start a high quality, accessible and affordable school system that addresses school drop outs, unemployment, and increasing suicide rates while creating new opportunities in Northern Pakistan”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

## DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

Our growing team of dedicated volunteers provides support to all areas of our operations, from social media promotion, photography, event management and grant writing to marketing and accounting. We are fortunate to have volunteers in Canada and around the world. This international perspective is very important as our students come from all walks of life and various developing countries and many of them will study abroad.

We are always looking to add talented and enthusiastic volunteers to our team. Please review and apply for open positions on our website: [www.thesparkofhope.org/volunteer/](http://www.thesparkofhope.org/volunteer/) or let us know how you can help.

# IN THE FIELD



MAY 2015

Some of our first graduands, from the Asian University for Women, Bangladesh



JUNE 2015

Susan Ormiston, CBC (right), Keynote Speaker at the Foundation's awareness evening, Aga Khan Museum



JUNE 2016

Narmin Ismail, CEO, honoured with RBC Top25 Canadian Immigrant Award 2016



NOV 2016

Elvire Djongo (PhD), scholar from Cameroon with Forest Rangers in Northern Cameroon



OCT 2015

Guests at the Foundation's Women as Architects of Change awareness dinner, Toronto



NOV 2015

AKU IED - Spark of Hope Scholars - graduating class with a Master's degree in Education, Karachi



DEC 2016

Eman Abushabab, right, scholar from Palestine discussing nutritional status during an internship



MAR 2017

Signing of agreement with Université Laval to support students at various levels of study, Quebec

**Tahira Sher Ali** | Pakistan

MEd | Aga Khan University – Institute for Educational Development, Pakistan

**“I want to revamp the academics and the management of my educational institution in line with my new knowledge and skills. I also want to be an expert in my profession for the entire area in Gilgit Baltistan.”**



[VIEW FULL STORY](#)

## FROM OUR BENEFACTORS

We are humbled to be supporters of the Spark of Hope Foundation. Our support is much more meaningful for us because we know we are supporting two female students. We feel that educating and empowering females will have a multi-generational impact for the family. Females in developing countries face many more barriers to education and much more discrimination than those in the West generally experience. We are reminded of an old African proverb “if we educate a boy, we educate one person. If we educate a girl, we educate a family – and a whole nation.”

**The Virani Family** | Calgary

Begum and I are committed to expanding access to quality education for young, energetic, ambitious and capable women who can make a positive impact in their communities. By being a benefactor, The Spark of Hope Foundation provides us an avenue to implement our promise. It allows us to share in, and be inspired by, all the students’ goals, aspirations and achievements. We hope to continue to support the Foundation as it builds its capacity to support the ever-increasing needs of its global constituency.

**Alloudin Bhanji and Begum Verjee** | Markham

As a female and a woman of colour, I know first hand how important it is to compete in today’s labour market. The importance of professional experience coupled with a solid education is ever more crucial. As women, we must continuously prove our worth, continuously strive to achieve success and continuously re-invent ourselves. Partnering with the Spark of Hope Foundation has allowed us to share the blessings we have received in our lives and pay it forward!

**Rumina Ratansi, CHRL, CCA Leadership Empire** | Mississauga

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