Young Leaders Conference (YLC) is the premier leadership development program for motivated young individuals from across Pakistan. This 6-day leadership journey provides an out-of-classroom learning experience and a rigorous curriculum that equips participants with the confidence, independence, skills and global competitiveness required of the next generation of future leaders. They get the opportunity to broaden their perspectives by interacting with well-known leaders in the business, social, cultural and public sectors. In addition, the participate in activities such as panel discussions, thematic intervention sessions, entrepreneurial spotlights, simulations, field trips, cultural events, summit debates etc. By living together, they learn empathy and patience. They listen to each other and acquire an appreciation of human diversity, opinions and insights. YLC is a tough program that allows the youth to stretch and discover their adaptability, empowering them to become contributing members of society. YLC integrates themes that revolve around development, economics, politics, environment, culture, corporate, self-awareness and capacity building.
YLC 2016 - Theme and Context

This year YLC celebrated 15 years. Young Leaders Conference aims to provide young adults with the confidence and exposure to make informed personal and professional choices. The theme for this year was ‘The Highway’, and the concept ties in with the YLC ethos of ‘Freedom with Discipline’. The Highway allows for greater speed, but it requires taking on greater responsibility. The theme was integrated into the program this year by bringing together expert speakers, scholars, educationists, trainers, activists and politicians to address a wide range of issues such as gender disparity, an alienated youth, and societal taboos as well as employability training, career counseling and educational opportunities. The Highway combines proactive learning and capacity building with insightful sessions and simulations that put the participants in charge and allowed them to explore and discover for themselves. Through introduction to alternative narratives on key issues, as well as an exploration into the arts, history, literature, and music, The Highway proved to be a platform where the youth are empowered through exposure to ideas and concepts to become ambassadors for greater social justice and equality.

Participant Demographics

The mix of participants represented 60 cities, towns and villages including remote areas like Lakki Marwat (KPK), Vehari, Awaran, Lasbela (Balochistan), Mirpur Mathelo (Sindh), Gilgit Baltistan, Kot Addu (Punjab) and many others. The majority of the participants hailed from cities like Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar. 65% of the participants were male, and 35% were female.
The theme for the first day reflected the overall theme of ‘The Highway’. The ‘Crossroads’ signified a phase in the journey of the participants who are setting out to explore and discover. Arrivals and registrations at Dreamworld began at 9 am and lasted till noon, with participants collecting their team t-shirts and YLC kits upon arrival. The Enablers engaged the participants in ice breakers, energizers and group activities until the inauguration ceremony formally began at 3 pm.

The official start of the conference began with the inauguration ceremony. A welcome address was delivered by Kamran Rizvi, Founding Director at SoL, who interacted with the audience regarding their ambitions and passions in life. After providing an overview of YLC and its history, he went on to introduce and deliver a note of thanks to the sponsors which included EBM, Mobilink, Thai Engineering Limited, U-Report, UNICEF, Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, and PPAF ACM Gold, Fauji Fertilizers, Faysal Bank, ACM Gold, Suzuki, Habbit, Hubco, Engro, SoL, Torque, Mitsubishi, SSGC, Dalda, HMBL and British Council, Cinepax, Shamrock Communications, Jang Media Group and Suno Pakistan FM 89.4. He welcomed on stage the YLC Champ for 2016, Ms. Bismah Khan.
After which, Ms. Saadia Naveed Butt from EBM shared a few words with the participants regarding the long established history of EBM’s efforts for youth empowerment, and a note of encouragement to the participants to pursue their ambitions in life with relentless spirit. Following this, a cake-cutting ceremony was conducted to celebrate the history of collaboration and partnership between EBM and YLC, and commemorate the 15th year of the annual conference.

Ali Zafar and Ali Hamza both addressed the audience with anecdotes of their personal struggles and achievements. Ali Hamza also performed a set of songs for the audience.
Also present with the participants on this occasion were Ms. Attiya Inaam from EBM, Mr. Wahib Aslam and Ms. Maleeha Saeed from Mobilink, Mr. Amir Amjad from Freidrich Naumann Foundation, Mr. Syed Mohd. Irtiza from Dalda, Dr. Ahsan Siddiqui from Hilton Pharma, Ms. Mariyam Jabeen from House of Habib, Ms. Komal Shameem from Mitsubishi, Ms. Hamid Malik from UNICEF, Mr. Irfan Pardesi from ACM Gold, Ms. Hiba Adawy from USEFP, and Mr. Azdar Mufti and Mr. Iftikhar Ahmed from British Council. Each of the representatives was kind enough to deliver a small message for their young audience.

After a cake cutting ceremony, the Enablers and Managers offered a special performance for the audience, including a tribute to the late Pakistani icons Amjad Sabri and Abdul Sattar Edhi during a candle-lighting ceremony in which the participants also took part.
The participants then broke off into groups with representatives from partnering organizations for mentoring sessions. The Mentors included Kamran Rizvi, Shireen Naqvi, Salma Khan, Ali Hamza, Ali Zafar, Irfan Pardesi from ACM Gold, and Amir Amjad from Freidrich Naumann Foundation. Upon their return, Shireen Naqvi, Founder at SoL, conducted a capacity building session titled ‘In You There is the World’. The participants then offered their own reflections on the day and shared their emotions in their teams with their Enablers, before the first day officially came to a close.
Day two of Young Leaders Conference was themed ‘Sidewalk- Development Debate’, with Day Champ Shireen Naqvi, founder at School of Leadership, revolved around work in the development sector, its challenges, and the criticism that surrounds it.
EDHI: A MIRROR TO THE BLIND

The day began with a field visit to the Edhi center. The visit proved to be an especially important and emotional learning experience. The participants were engaged in a reflective session with Javed Jabbar on the strength of character and devotion to ideals that shapes personalities such as Abdul Sattar Edhi.

DROP THE GENDER MASK

Mobilink, an organization that has for long devoted its efforts towards combating gender disparity and promoting inclusivity, brought to the audience a segment aimed at breaking gender stereotypes, titled ‘Drop the Gender Mask’. Mobilink’s vision for organizational restructuring to be more inclusive and its efforts towards promoting gender parity are aligned with YLC’s aim to promote social integration and combat discrimination through awareness and constructive action. This year, Mobilink has sponsored 18 female participants from underprivileged communities to attend YLC and learn and grow from the opportunities it offers. YLC welcomed Salman Hafeez, Sarwat Salahuddin and Nimrah Sohail from the organization at the 15th YLC to speak on gender and inclusivity.
Shahida Saleem from ILMpossible delivered a keynote session on ‘Rethinking Education’. Shahida is an internationally recognized professional, experienced in building sustainable social development programs using private sector partners and emerging technologies. She has over 25 years of international business and management experience including work on multi-million dollar donor funded projects. She is recognized for her “out of the box” solutions thinking, and has successfully built many cross sector collaborations to address critical social issues. During the session, she stressed the importance of education, whether formal or informal, and the need for reworking the systemic flaws that plague Pakistan’s education system.

During sessions designed to introduce Sustainable Development Goals, the participants welcomed a number of guest speakers including Master Ayub, Sheema Kermani, Masarrat Misbah, and Afreena Noor, five brilliant change makers in their respective fields, who conducted segments during parallel workshops on a diverse set of issues.
No one can deny the fact that education is the inalienable birth right of every child. In the segment, Mohammad Ayub Khan, famously known as Master Ayub, a Pakistani educator, philanthropist and civil servant who is recognized for spending his after-job hours and weekends teaching students in an open-air school in Islamabad, shared his struggles and how he overcame them in the course of his own attempts to increase access to education for the children in his community.

Sheema Kermani, an internationally recognized artiste, activist and founder of Tehreek e Niswaan, conducted this session. She spoke about how women have been revolutionary leaders, unparalleled artists, and brilliant scientist when they have been allowed to succeed. Unfortunately, in a repressive system of institutionalized misogyny, they have been held back for centuries. Her session offered perspectives on how to counter these regressive attitudes, and build greater gender equality.
Musrrat Misbah, founder of the Smile again Foundation which treats acid attack victims and helps them rebuild their lives, led this session on how to help create inlets into the mainstream for historically marginalized groups. She spoke about how to make public spaces more welcoming for the differently-abled, as this allows social assimilation and builds stronger, more inclusive communities. From the way we design our spaces, to how we communicate, to our individual attitudes towards the differently-abled, this integration is a cumulative process.

Afreena Noor is a YLC 2005 alumnus and Fulbright scholar with an MPA from UPenn (G’13). She was conferred with the John K. Parker Award in 2012 and awarded special recognition for Student Government Leadership in 2013. Afreena was part of the core team that established the Free & Fair Election Network back in 2007 and has been working with Telenor Pakistan since 2014. Her session focused on how despite the fact that a well-functioning workforce is always good for business, in the Post-Fordist economy, there is a need to recognize that a workforce has much more to contribute than just their labor. She spoke about what is needed to build a workforce that is equipped with the skills for critical analysis, and a state that is invested in the personal and professional development of individuals.
Ms. Hira Hafeez Ur Rehman coordinates the implementation of U-Report PakAvaz in Pakistan. She provides leadership in managing the platform including partner management, media and social mobilization strategy and communication. Mr. Elliot McBride is coordinating Innovation’s portfolio at UNICEF and is looking after the technical execution of U-Report. They spoke regarding U-Report: Pak Avaz, a free SMS tool to engage children and young people in community development and social monitoring for positive change in Pakistan.

Global Education Opportunities

All over the world, people are coming together to learn from each other; a merging of technologies, intellects, cultures and histories is the future of education. In this segment, the participants were introduced to new opportunities to travel and learn.
At the ExtraCorp dinner, an activity that simulates the struggles of the differently-abled to help sensitize the participants to their difficulties, the participants share their reflections after having visited Edhi Center the same day.

It was an emotional moment for the participants who connected with each other, and broke down barriers to form stronger bonds. Some of the participants even volunteered to help those who could not eat for themselves. They were also sensitized towards global hunger and how they can reduce food wastage to be more responsible, and appreciate what they have.
The third day of the conference was all about Economics. Guest speakers including successful entrepreneurs, investment gurus, and business tycoons were invited to speak to the audience about their experiences and what they had learned from the challenges they faced. They were also given career counseling about how to choose the right career, new technologies and how to benefit from them, and where and how to invest to get the best returns.
HEPATITIS WALK

As the third day coincided with ‘World Hepatitis Day’, the participants welcomed representatives from Hilton Pharma, who engaged them in an awareness session on symptoms, preventive and curative measures for Hepatitis. This was followed by a Hepatitis Walk where participants designed and displayed their own posters for Hepatitis Awareness walk in Dreamworld.

EMERGING MARKETS

Umair Jaliawala took the stage to speak to the participants about markets for investing not only one’s wealth, but also one’s personal talents. His session enlightened the participants about what the global landscape looks like when it comes to economics, which areas are ripe for growth, and which industries are dying out.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: CAFÉ OPPORTUNITIES

Changing global trends have opened up the doors for newer opportunities, but sometimes it can be difficult to discern which one is best for one to embrace. In this segment, experienced professionals were present to help the participant figure out just where are the best opportunities for young adults stepping into their professional lives.

Umair Jaliawala welcomed a set of guest speakers which included Anees Husain, Junaid Iqbal, Saba Gul, Ali Ansari, and Irfan Pardesi. Each speaker was invited on stag to briefly talk to the participants and invite them to attend their session, elaborating on what they had to offer and what the participants would learn from being a part of it.
Ali Ansari has served as President & CEO of Engro Corporation, while concurrently serving as Chairman of all its subsidiaries from May 2012 till May 2015. He has now partnered with Bank Al Falah in Al Falah Securities. He also serves on the board of Kashf Foundation and is a member of the Advisory board of Acumen Fund Pakistan and Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Aman Centre of Entrepreneurship Development at IBA.

Ali Ansari’s session focused on rural Pakistan and how to integrate technology into traditional enterprise, in order to infuse new life into the agricultural sector of Pakistan. He said that ‘Pakistan has amazing scope’ when it comes to technology, largely because the technological industry is underutilized. He mentioned that technology must not be imposed, that businesses must ‘...marry technology with people, especially because there is a great deal of mistrust and fear in our part of the world when it comes to technology. Following this, he shared his ideas for technological innovation in the rural sector with the participants, which included a weather app that communicates the optimum times for harvest and plantation.
Anees Husain has been preparing students for international certification examinations, as well as entrance tests to numerous local universities since 1989, during which he has also taught in some of the best schools of Karachi such as Karachi Grammar School, The Lyceum School, City School, Beaconhouse Public School, International School of Karachi, College of Business Management (CBM) Karachi, Asian Management Institute (AMI) and Griffith College.

He spoke about time management and how to use one’s time effectively, offering practical advice for being more efficient and punctual, and for investing time into cultivating one’s intellect.
Junaid Iqbal Managing Director of Careem Pakistan, and former CEO of Elixir securities and BMA Financial Services, addressed the participants and told them the Careem story. He spoke at length about the future of Careem, how it plans to expand, and the opportunities and threats that lie in its path. He also shared some brilliant ideas with the participants about possible routes for entrepreneurship, including cross-platform service integration, as he and the audience bounced ideas back and forth.

Junaid Iqbal mentioned that ‘it is the middle class which changes the face of economics’. He also told the audience ‘I thought women would be afraid to use our service, but 45% of our customers are women’, also saying that ‘...women feel unshackled and part of the economic process’ now that they can participate in exchange and have access to public spaces. His presentation showed Tweets from women who had used Careem and felt ‘liberated’ because they are no longer dependent on the men in their families to drive them.
Saba Gul is an MIT-educated engineer turned entrepreneur, and the CEO of Popinjay, a luxury label that connects international markets to master artisans in the developing world. Popinjay’s handcrafted leather bags have received global acclaim, reached thousands of customers, been spotted at the Emmy Awards, and carried by large US retailers. Saba worked as a technologist in Silicon Valley prior to Popinjay.

Saba spoke about how entrepreneurship, in particular social entrepreneurship, is not simply a business opportunity, it is a social service. Through social entrepreneurship one can create a positive impact in society and bring change for the better.
Irfan Pardesi from ACM Gold, an online trading company providing an array of financial products and services, spoke to the young participants about entrepreneurship and building businesses from scratch. He said ‘Focus on the development of ideas, don’t do something you don’t feel strongly about.’

He negated the idea that there are no opportunities in Pakistan by saying that ‘…there is massive depth in every industry…you have to connect the right supplier with the existing demand.’ He spoke in detail regarding the importance of being able to identify the right opportunities, and how to make use of them. He also offered some career counseling insight by inviting the participants to follow their ambitions and passions, and never to work for something they do not believe in.
An activity sponsored by YLC founding partner, EBM, was conducted by Kamran Rizvi. Before the activity, an EBM video was played, highlighting the history of EBM and its efforts towards promoting youth leadership and empowerment. Kamran Rizvi then asked the Enablers to coordinate with their teams to work together and identify leadership qualities which they feel are essential for a true leader. These qualities were written down on the blank margins of a piece of canvas which connected to other similar pieces to form a puzzle. The completed puzzle took the shape of the EBM logo, with the input on leadership qualities written by the participants framing it.

The activity was thoroughly enjoyed by the participants and raised the energy in the room to new heights. It also helped instill into the participants the importance of inculcating within themselves the qualities they had highlighted. It was also an important lesson for the participants in teamwork and communication, in channelizing their energies towards a specific goal, and how all feats of greatness are accomplished through working together and supporting each other.
During Startups Showcasing, YLC welcomed on stage Sameer Ahmed Khan (CEO & Co-founder at "Social Champ" and "OuzelSystems"), Team Teddict (the force behind the e-learning platform; Teddict) and the duo from Labcloud (a web-based, easy-to-use management system for pathological labs to manage their data online), three young, highly successful entrepreneurial ventures, to speak to the audience. All three speakers were close to the ages of the participants themselves, showing them that age has nothing to do with success. They related their stories and experiences, offering advice and motivation to the participants to pursue their ambitions.
Faisal Kapadia is a digital strategist and CEO of MindMap communications, a leading digital and PR agency. He is also a writer with over a 100 articles in print and one of the first bloggers in Pakistan. He writes predominantly on social issues as well as digital media and is known as Pakistan's foremost expert in crowd sourcing and narrative-change campaigns online. He is also a mentor at Google Nest and an advisor to the ‘I am Karachi’ organization. He is also an award winning podcaster.

He has worked extensively for social uplift and disaster management. His session focused on how to combine social work with one's business, and how to do the kind of work that benefits society at large.
HOW TO MAKE THE RIGHT INVESTMENT

Mir Mohammad Ali Khan is an internationally renowned Investment Banker, Entrepreneur, and Capital Markets Advisor. At the age of 29, he became the youngest Chairman and Founder of a full-service Investment Bank in America, and the first Muslim to have owned an investment bank on Wall Street. He has had a successful career as Founder and Chairman: The Financial Group, Inc., Federal Advisor to Government of Pakistan, and a Member of New Jersey Governors Council. He introduced Islamic Banking Research into mainstream America by co-sponsoring and advising Harvard University as they launched Harvard Islamic Finance and Information Program (HIFIP). He also developed the world’s First Islamic Banking Benchmark Index on Wall Street named KMS-SAMI (Socially Aware Muslim Index) which is now a functional index run by The Dow Jones Indices.

Mir Muhammad Ali Khan’s session delivered insight to the participants about how to build big when starting from scratch. He shared personal anecdotes from when he first moved to the United States with no money to his name, and had to work odd jobs to pay rent. He discussed his struggle on the journey from having no money to becoming one of the most successful investment gurus in the world, and offered practical advice on how to make sense of the investment market, and pick the investment with the best returns.
Maalik Khaaskhely, President at School of Leadership Foundation, led a session on Conflict Resolution. He discussed with the participants the steps in the process of peace building, beginning with identification of a conflict and ending with resolution. He said ‘Little red flags can turn into major conflict points’, and that these must be dealt with as soon as they are noticed. He also explained how to build unity and integrate teams for better teamwork and minimizing disagreements.

At the end of Day 3, the participants were asked to dress in clothes which represented their traditions and culture. During dinner, they interacted with each other, relating stories about their traditions, histories, fables, music, dance and art. The night was full of fun and energy as the participants were enjoyed conversing with one another and learning more about the myriad people that add diversity to Pakistan.
July 29
Day Four

PATROL - STATE POWER

Day four was all about Politics and State Power. The Day Champ, Uzair Ausaf, engaged the audience in a discussion about the social contract, about why the law exists, who makes it, and why citizens of a nation-state are bound by it. He spoke about powers, rights and limitations of the state, and how and where citizens can challenge, accept or negotiate them.
An activity titled ‘Democracy in Action’ simulated the electoral process from initiation, to campaigning, voting, assembly formation and summit bill presentations was conducted on this day. The purpose of the activity was to help initiate the participants with how governments and politics work. Raza Haroon was present after the activity to share his views and insight, giving birth to a discourse on subjects such as state law, the place of religion in politics, the judicial system, and the politics of representation.

Dr. Mohsin Naqvi, a noted scholar and writer, enlightened the participants in this segment about what the real Islam, according to the text and context, teaches us. He spoke of how religion has been disengaged from its spiritual roots and has instead become a tool for exploitation and political manipulation. Religious authorities have distorted it beyond recognition, at schools and religious institutions, at home and in society, religion has mutated from its original form into something beyond recognition. He engaged the participants, inviting feedback and opinions on the sensitive topic, and the participants were eager to contribute.
SAY YOUR TRUTH OUT LOUD

Jibrán Nasir is a prime example of standing up for the truth when the odds are against you. In his segment, he addressed the participants to motivate them and help them find the courage to speak up against injustice, intolerance and inequality. He explained that if one is neutral when it comes to injustice, then one is on the side of the oppressor. It is important to raise your voice and condemn oppression and tyranny, highlighting examples from his own political career.

THE WAR OF NARRATIVES

Lt Gen. (R) Asad Durrani graduated from Government College Lahore in 1959, and was commissioned from the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) in 1960. During his 34 years with the Army, he did a number of command, staff and instructional appointments, and took part in the wars of 65 and 71. Some of his note worthy assignments include instructorship at the PMA and Command and Staff College Quetta; Director General Military Intelligence and Inter Services Intelligence; Inspector General Training and Evaluation at the GHQ; and Commandant National Defence College (now a university). He retired in May 1993.

His session was focused on the fact that today’s youth find themselves in the crossfire of perspectives with rising nationalist sentiment, and an ineffective counter-extremist narrative. In the absence of strong alternative narratives, terrorist organizations have on occasions managed to incite sympathy. Gen. (R.) Asad Durrani enlightened the audience about the dangers that such a state of affairs threaten our impressionable youth with, and how to develop an alternative discourse that is strong enough to counter the existing one.
AAj TV was present to record this special session conducted with Gen. Lt. (R) Asad Durrani, Shahzad Nawaz, Kamran Rizvi, Yousuf Bashir Qureshi, and Umair Jaliawala as speakers and Rizwan Jaffer as moderator. The session was a panel discussion about how we can make Pakistan our passion. The speakers invited the participants to share their perspectives on how we can turn our passion for Pakistan into practical action points, and work towards building a more concrete future for the country.
This segment with Shahzad Nawaz was a critical analysis and reflection on how the Pakistani media works. Armed with some harsh truths about the media and news industry in Pakistan, he offered insight on how sensationalism has deteriorated media and driven it away from the purpose it is supposed to serve. He also offered advice into how we can counter this, and what we can do to push for greater media accountability.
The fifth day of the conference was focused on bringing all the learning of the past four days into implementation. The day started with the Day Champ, Asma Mustafa, addressing the audience with practical advice about how to deal with the challenges they would face upon their return from the conference.
Asif Farrukhi is a fiction-writer, critic and translator and has edited and compiled many anthologies of Pakistani writers. He has published six collections of short stories and two collections of literary criticisms. He also edits and publishes a literary journal in Urdu called ‘Duniya Azad’. In 2010, he collaborated with Oxford University Press, and the British Council to initiate the Karachi Literature Festival, and is recognized as one of the founders of the annual event. Dr. Farrukhi’s work has been recognized by the Pakistan government, in 1995 he received the Prime Minister’s award for literature and was awarded the Tamgha-e- Ihtiaz (Medal of Excellence) by the President of Pakistan.

During his session he spoke about the importance of reading and promoting literature. He encouraged the participants to explore the world of literature, saying ‘Literature elevates you’. He also said ‘The purpose of an education is to equip students with essential life skills’. He also created awareness about the importance of writing as a form of self expression, and how technology can be integrated into the arts, elaborating how, in the face of inadequate resources and too many restrictions when it comes to publication, ‘…a strong online community is writing about alternative narratives’.
Tofiq Pasha Mooraj is a patriot, an adventurer, a lover of nature, a traveler and an activist. He has spent his life working for the protection of environment, enlightening individuals about the importance of environment conservation and water conservation, working for food security initiatives, women’s livelihood issues and for the mentoring of the youth.

His session was also focused on offering the audience advice on being environmentally conscious, as well as on how to pick the right career, saying ‘Education and careers have become too money-oriented, choose a profession that makes you happy’. He also said that ‘We are quick to criticize and too late to act’, and that ‘the biggest paradox of our times is that children and their parents are on different pages’, and the ‘…our biggest challenge is a growing population’, but ‘…the youth can change everything if they want to, it is up to them’.
Yousuf Bashir Qureshi's talents and passions range from fashion design, photography and painting, to food science and farming. He also has a welfare project, ‘United Pakistan’, a social program that he initiated amidst the flood disaster in Pakistan.

Yusuf Bashir Qureshi’s session delivered to the audience important lessons on passion, ambition and the search for something beyond materiality. He spoke of knowledge and wisdom, saying ‘Lots of people in the world are knowledgable, but unless you pass on that knowledge you cannot have wisdom’. He also focused on spirituality, saying that one’s intention proves one’s desire to do something, and that ‘We are no longer living in the times of this OR that, but in the times of this AND that”
'Agahi Zarooori Hai', sponsored by Hilton Pharma, was an awareness session on menstruation. The session shares the name with the national campaign, which strives to break the stigma associated with women health issues, in particular, those related to menstruation. The segment began with a conversation with the audience about the importance for both men and women to understand the physiological changes their bodies go through during puberty. As menstruation can be a taboo topic in this part of the world, the entire session was framed in a way that created a safe space for the talk, and invited the participants to approach it with an open mind.

Fizza Rehman from Hilton Pharma welcomed on stage Dr. Subhana Tayyab, Professor and HoD at Liquat National Hospital, and Professor at Dow University, Dr. Fauzia Parveen, Professor and Chairperson at Dow Univeristy, Rehana Mughal, Consultant Gynecologist at Agha Khan Hospital and South City Hospital, and Marvi Memon, from ARY News, to be a part of the conversation. It was stressed throughout that men need to be given access to information about menstruation, as they play key roles in the lives of the women around them as brothers, fathers, sons or husbands. Dialogue about menstruation can help by changing traditionally regressive attitudes and opening platforms for discussion, which in turn allows women to discuss medical issues related to menstruation with their doctors, partners to make informed decisions about family planning, improves access to and use of menstrual hygiene products and much, much more. Symptoms, detection and curative measures for Heavy Menstrual Bleeding, which affects women all over the world and requires a surgical procedure known as a ‘hysterectomy’, were discussed amongst the participants as well.

At the end of the session, an activity was conducted by Hilton Pharma representatives, where balls of yarn were distributed amongst the teams. The team members were then asked to hold different ends of the yarn, while pictures were taken of them. The purpose of the activity was to show them that we are all connected, so that whatever affects one of us, affects us all.
Bilal Tanweer is the author of ‘The Scatter Here Is Too Great’ (Random House India, 2013), which won the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize and was shortlisted for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature and The Chautauqua Prize. His work has appeared in The New York Times, Dawn, Granta, Vallum, Critical Muslim, The Caravan and Words Without Borders.

The session was for budding writers and artists, teaching them how to hone their skills and perfect their art with training and practice. He spoke about his own experiences as a writer, and offered the participants advice on how to find success while pursuing their passion. He also encouraged the participants to read and inculcate a love for literature and the arts, because to be a great writer, one must read.
YOU DESERVE SIX-PACKS

The Forty Two Day Challenge ™ (42DC) conducts High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workout regimes in the form of large boot camps for one hour, each day of the week. The session enlightened the participants about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, from sleep schedules to healthy work habits, to exercise and sleep schedules, the team explained how each aspect of one’s daily life has an effect on overall health and fitness. The team was passionate and energetic and the participants enjoyed listening to and learning from them and were eager to implement the team’s advice to achieve their fitness goals.
Let. Gen (R) Asad Durrani took the stage to speak to the audience during ‘Beyond the Obvious’. The session was an in-depth analysis of the politics of the country. His insight from the experience of working closely for many years with the government allowed his segment to be a candid, behind-the-scenes look into history.

From strategic policy, to international relations to the current face of the global political economy, Gen. Durrani’s session was an enlightening session for the participants.
Faisal Akram Gill from CAPA Academy of Performing Arts conducted a segment with the participants which focused on music. He spoke about music therapy, and the relationship between the psyche, emotions and music. He discussed how music serves as a form of expression, to share what we often cannot share through words.

He enlightened the audience regarding the historical importance of music as well, explaining that with music it is possible to connect with people, stir emotions, and give birth to new ideas.
Kamran Rizvi addressed the audience in this segment, sharing some wisdom with the audience about how to live a life that does not fall into extremes. Often, young people are confused because they want to follow a profession where they can gain wealth and fame, but they also want to pursue their passions. During the session Kamran Rizvi gave the youngsters some advice during his informative and engaging session on how to make their passion work for them, and find success doing what they love most.
**WORLD CAFÉ**

At World Café, the participants sat together at tables lined with blank paper. On these pieces of paper the participants noted down their reflections from the conference, after which they moved on to the next table, leaving behind what they had written for the next set of participants to read and contribute to. They also spoke to each other sharing and exchanging histories, ideas and opinions. The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate the importance of communication to build understanding, and to give the participants the opportunity to voice their opinions and offer their feedback. After the activity, the participants also shared verbally their feelings and opinions. Some differently abled participants were invited to the front of the stage to share their thoughts in particular.

**FAREWELL DINNER**

The farewell dinner was conducted on the night of the fifth day of the conference. The participants were dressed formally as they enjoyed their meal and an intimate concert performance by Zamad Baig, who rose to fame after he won the title of becoming the first Pakistan Idol in the country.
The day began with Waqar Ali speaking to the participants about their Social Enterprise Projects. Social Enterprise Projects are an integral part of Young Leaders Conference, and bring into implementation all that they learn in the six days of the conference. The participants are required to design, plan and execute within three months of the conference a Social Enterprise Project. It is essential that this project employs a sustainability model, and is initiated with the aim to positively affect their communities. Upon completion of the projects, the participants are awarded YLC certificates. Previously, participants have worked with marginalized communities, for women empowerment, education, health and the like.
Qaiser Abbas was present at YLC to inspire the audience with his life story, narrating his struggles and how he overcame the challenges he faced on his journey to success. Addressing the audience, he said ‘Three things that hold people back from achieving their dreams are money, emotions, and physical setbacks. I’ve been through all three of these challenges’. He mentioned the importance of working towards one’s goal and never giving up, relating how he had been rejected from 300 interviews but never stopped trying. He said ‘achievement has become a science with a formula, but fulfillment is an individual journey… the turning point in my life was when I stopped thinking of myself and started doing things for others’. He graphed his story for the audience, beginning with his humble beginnings, and ending with his now extremely successful trainings. He spoke of how resilience and a can-do attitude kept him going through the years, obliterating obstacles and eventually bringing him the success he dreamt of.
Young Leaders Conference was initiated in 2002, and since then has made a comeback every year, with 300 new participants each year. All YLC participants are exceptionally talented and brilliant young men and women, but some in particular stand out head and shoulders above rest.

In this segment, the participants were introduced to some shining examples of YLCians from the past who have startled the world with their innovative, unique and original approach, ideas or solutions. This year, the participants welcomed Farhan Ali Jamali. ‘Jewels of YLC’ celebrated the true YLC spirit, and offered inspiration for the current batch whose journey has just begun.
Ms. Bismah khan- The YLC Champ took the stage to share her experience and talk about the importance of facing your fear in order to grow. She expressed that despite the fact that each of us faces fears in the form of sorrow, worries, and anxieties to some extent, we must realize that it is normal. She said that the real question is what we do with those emotions, when they emerge. Many of us spend most of our lives trying to run, hide, or protect ourselves from what we fear, and only a few have the courage to step up against our fears, face them, and eventually overcome them. She followed this with a note of thanks to the participants, team and the sponsors.
The last session of the day, and the conference, was delivered by Umair Jaliawala. He spoke about how and why change is inevitable, as it is an essential part of life as we move from one phase or state to another. He also spoke of how change always takes place along the backdrop of certain cultural, historical, economic and social factors, and how these factors affect how and why societies change, and the best way to deal with the challenges that accompany this transition. He then shared an emotional moment on stage, announcing his retirement as CEO of SoL, and saying goodbye to the audience.

The conference came to a close on a high note at the evening of the sixth day, after which the participants made their way back home. Still full of energy after six rigorous days, the cheering youngsters were full of positivity and learning from their time at YLC, ready to start acting and changing the world.