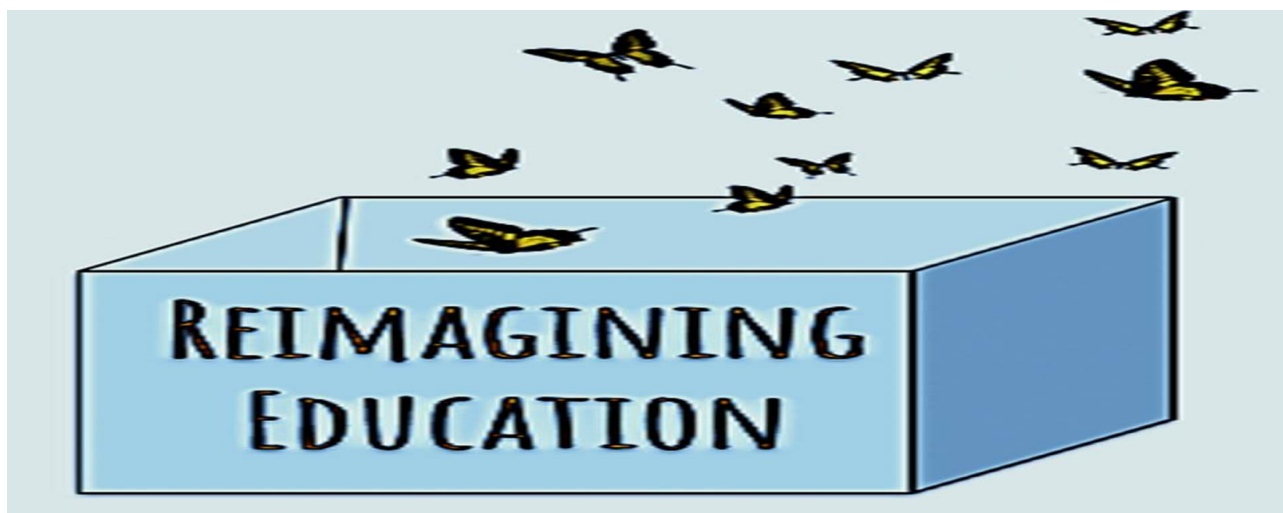


EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND GIRLS FROM UNDERPRIVILEGED BACKGROUNDS

by **Amna Habiba**

Founder Global Creative Hub & MoodUp.



Hello everyone and thank you so much for attending my session on Reimagining Education and identifying creative potential. I am Amnah Abiba, a 15 year old 10 grader, from Pakistan. I am also a founder, creator, activist and advocate. I was also titled Pakistan's youngest female participant in a digital competition by the Ministry of social welfare. So today I will be talking about a topic that drastically changed my life, that is Education, and how it looked like pre covid during covid and post covid and how it has impacted on me throughout my journey.

PRE COVID



So I'm going to start from education pre covid, what it looked like to me in my culture, my community and my country.

I live in Pakistan, a country where schools use rote based learning methods limiting the creative capabilities and thinking styles of an individual. Because in this system not much focus is given on skill building and practical learning, and because as a student I have gone through this method myself, I know how it feels to be studying in a system where education is only based on how well you can repeat the lesson instead of how well you can practically implement things.

So, before covid-19 education to me only meant to be able to learn something and forget it after a test and that was something I did not question because it is the mainstream system here in Pakistan: a rote based learning method which gave me, like every other student in Pakistan, a limited thinking and not much creativeness.



Social media play another very limiting role when students aren't provided with any other activities, any core curriculum activities. They use social media apps like Snapchat, Tick Tock, YouTube, Instagram and many of those popular platforms without knowing how they work and what can be really important to their lives. When not provided with that information, students tend to lose interest in school subjects and are led to convey all their

interests in these sort of activities, and not in something that would be really beneficial for their future career.

As for the educational path students go through here in Pakistan, it starts from Primary School and goes on till University. The whole journey of learning before they reach University lasts 15 years, in which not many schools focus on co-curricular activities and where curricular activities are not established on students' practical based learning and skill based training. All this leads to a great confusion when students are to choose their future career because they haven't been provided with the resources and the tools to understand what will happen in the future.

DURING COVID



So how did covid-19 impact on me and my learning and how it helped me reimagine what education means to me.

Back in March 2020, my mum introduced me to Coursera, an online platform that offers online courses. My first course at that time helped me realise and reimagine what Education meant to me. To me, before that time, education only meant learning something and then forgetting it soon after writing it down in a piece of paper, but when I took part on that online course I gained a very different perspective on what education meant and how practical skill based learning was usefully implemented in that way.

The Coursera instructors used a very different method, something that I wasn't aware of and it was completely unique to me. Being exposed to such a method provided me with the opportunity to realise how important it was the practical based learning. This learning opportunity changed my perspective on education and provided me with a learning edge over other students as to those skills, that were only taught at university levels and that led me to be a lifelong learner. So I covered a modern ITI course, lots of programs, I got selected for Pakistan most prestigious Stem School internships and I also got a fellowship. I attended courses on topics ranging from Web Design to Artificial Intelligence and Interpreneurship and all of these courses and all of the skills that I acquired from them gave me the desire to keep on learning and trying new things and new skills. And this huge change of perspective – looking at education from a very different point of view – made me realise that I got an opportunity other young

people like me didn't. And then I wanted to find out why and how they didn't, and in particular why girls in my community didn't get the chance to be able to do things that I was doing.



And that was because here we are still using the rote based learning method and there are lots of stereotypes and bias that girls have to face when it comes to learning. According to these stereotypes girls should not attend higher education or stem girls had better stay at home and so on. I finally realised that we need to bring a change and break down all these stereotypes. Girls

should be provided with the same opportunities and the same resources as boys are. And we need to develop a greater awareness on why girls' education is important and why boys and girls should get the same learning opportunities and the same resources.

And so to evoke awareness and change perspective I took some steps which advocated for what really mattered to me.

MY MISSION



So, how did I do that? As a girl myself and also having gone through the same system as others here have and living and experiencing the same things that many others do but having a very different perspective due to covid, I realized that we need to educate

and convince more people to get their daughters and their sisters into schools and also to promote education awareness and be actively advocating for what matters.

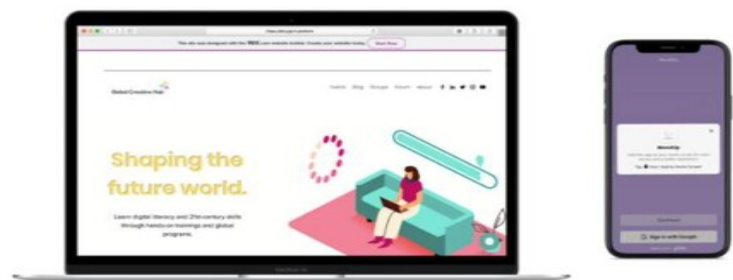
Advocacy is not about just going and telling or reading people something, or sharing posts on social media. It is much more than that. It is being able to share your story and how it impacts on you and being able to actively tell people how they can play a role in getting more involved in educational fields and stem fields and also promoting this campaign among girls themselves.

And so I started **Global Creative Hub**, an educational platform which is trying to promote XXI century skills through hands on training and global programs. So I committed myself in my mum's mission to train and educate at-risk youth and our main reason is to bring reforms in the education system, incorporating XXI century skills and skill based learning.

I tried to involve more women especially in stem and to provide especially underprivileged students with this global opportunity and training programs, so to give them a chance to explore what it feels like to study in another country. My mission is to give every person in Pakistan the same self-realization opportunity I had, to provide them with the same opportunities and resources that I received, and to make them able to improve their skills and their qualities as individuals.

IN CONCLUSION

- SOME ACHEIVEMENTS**
- Founded Global Creative Hub
 - Created MoodUp - Mental Health App
 - Worked with QuantumBlack (a McKinsey Company)
 - Pitched in the NHS PitchFest
 - Keynote Speaker x 2
 - Collaboration with IBM Z, My Super Connector
 - Lead Organizer for #GirlsInAIPK Hackathon



When you advocate for something and when you are passionate about something you are able to achieve more so here are some of my achievements:

- I started the Global Creative Hub
- I created MoodUp - a mental health app that helps teens to identify the influence of external factors on their mood
- I worked with QuantumBlack
- I have been a keynote speakers in meetings
- I collaborated with IBM Z,
- I organized the #GirlsInAIPK Hackathon.

I also care about three goals of the 2030 agenda: 1. gender equality, 2. reduced inequalities; 3. decent work and economic growth.

Thank you everybody for tuning in today and listening to my session. If you would like to connect with me I use LinkedIn. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask and I'll be more than happy to answer.