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The Pink Rickshaw; Putting Women in the Driving Seat

Fundraising campaign by [Zar Aslam](#)

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Description of Proposed Initiative:

Our proposal is to launch an initiative in Pakistan, titled “The Pink Rickshaw; Putting Women in the Driving Seat”.

5 The aim is to empower women by providing them with a means of transportation and a potential opportunity to generate revenue/income for their families and to give safe rides to other women.

The visibility of “The Pink Rickshaw; Putting Women in the Driving Seat” will revolutionize how women are perceived in the public space in Pakistan, encouraging other women to follow suit as drivers.

10 Thus, the initiative’s effect will perpetuate a virtuous cycle of women becoming self-reliant independent and productive members of the society.

Background:

15 Most middle and lower-middle class women in Pakistan depend on their brothers, fathers and husbands to get to work, school, hospital runs and for other errands. Public transport is often unavailable on many routes, but where it is available, women often face harassment waiting on street corners for rickshaws, at bus stops for buses and on board buses. With the ownership and ability to transport themselves and their kids, it will empower the women and open up the world and new possibilities to generate revenue for their families. They can become financially independent, providing safe rides for other women.

Challenges:

- There is no space for women as service providers (drivers) in the transportation industry. There is only 1 woman taxi driver in the entire country!
- 20 • Women are harassed on the streets while waiting for transportation to work or school.
- Many women do not enter the workforce or acquire education for lack of safe transportation.
- Semi-professional women can only find jobs which are walking distance from their homes.
- 25 • For lack of transportation, women are barred from personal growth activities, such as exercise and cultural, educational and extracurricular events because they are not deemed necessary by their male family members.
- Low visibility of empowered women from the lower and middle classes.
- Most women are at the mercy of their male family members' whims in terms of getting transportation to and from work and educational institutions and for this reason are often
- 30 late or absent from work/class.

Opportunities:

Women between the ages of 18–45 have immense potential but not enough tangible opportunities to tap into that potential. We believe that when a project like this is introduced to potential beneficiaries, there will be a huge demand from women who have the wherewithal to step up to this challenge. The effect of this very visible and tangible activity of empowered

35 lower-to-middle class women driving Pink Rickshaws on the road will create a desire in other women from the same strata, where they will see that it is possible for them to also become independent, mobile & generate income. That it can be done!

Often it is the power of visualization that drives and motivates people to achieve their goals and dreams. Initially this concept/project will create a big buzz and will probably be the talk

40 of town, over time it will become more acceptable and commonplace to see more women out driving rickshaws and even perhaps scooters. This activity will “break the ice”.

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