



# Pakistan



*Shameim lived with her five children in one of the poorest districts of Pakistan. She faced seemingly insurmountable challenges. Her youngest child was developmentally challenged and her husband began drinking after failing to find steady work. What could she do? She was a good seamstress, but she didn't even have the money to buy decent fabric.*

*Then Shameim met MEDA. Like thousands of women, she had marketable skills – but no way to market them because she was a woman. MEDA inspired and equipped Shameim to start a small business and they helped her market her products. Today she has a whole team of women who work with her.*

# Behind The Veil: Helping Poor Businesswomen

## Background

Pakistan is an impoverished country that has endured decades of political turmoil and conflict with neighboring countries. Poverty and underdevelopment have gripped a nation that is struggling for economic and social stability. Since the year 2000, the government has made substantial steps to address the economy through reforms and development spending. The GDP has grown in the last several years, thanks to increased industrial production, but social issues still overwhelm this struggling nation. Oppression is still the reality for many women in the nation, as many are forced to stay inside their homes, forbidden to work or be involved in activities that force them to interact with men.

## MEDA's Assessment

Thousands of women in Pakistan are struggling to earn enough income to raise their families. MEDA has begun an aggressive project called "Behind the Veil" which is equipping women with small loans, business and skills training, marketing expertise and sewing machines.

In MEDA's early assessment, we reached far beyond what was considered possible – 6000 homebound women at least doubling their incomes. While many thought this to be far too ambitious, our research confirmed the need and the desire to be employed. The overall program will include the training and deployment of 120 sales agents, facilitating market access of 180 urban micro garment makers, and involve nine commercial designers.

MEDA is expanding and replicating a new business model that uses mobile women sales agents who deal directly with homebound women.



## Outcomes:

MEDA will help poor homebound women embroiderers in rural Pakistan by:

- *Providing product design and quality control services to 6000 women*
- *Increasing the income of embroiderers by 100% through networking and training*
- *Creating and training 60 networks of intermediaries and embroiderers in design, business management and marketing*

## Cost:

Life of Project: \$600,000

Funder/Partner: U.S.  
Agency for International  
Development (USAID)

MEDA Match Needed:  
\$128,000