



PRESS RELEASE

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23rd October 2020: Youth Economic Forum's (YEF) "Live Session Series" in collaboration with DBTV discussed the 'The importance of Part-time work in Pakistan'. The session centered around the scope of part-time work in the country, its impact on students in terms of personal and professional growth as well as the cultural and societal barriers that affect individuals working part-time.

The session was centered around the experience of guest speakers Aalina Shahid (Co-Founder of Belva and the Creative Designer of their western line), Muhammad Zarrar Mumtaz (Co-founder of Froods a non-profit organization) and Sanea Sufian, the Marketing Head of Qissa Khwanan, a platform for artists. The seminar was hosted by Jamal Nasir, PR Associate at YEF.

The session started with Ms. Aalina introducing her clothing line, Belva, which she officially started three months ago. While discussing the importance of part-time work being a final year student of Bachelors in Public Administration she said that even though her degree is centered around policy-making, the relevant business courses as well as her role in university societies and events played a pivotal role in her managing and establishing a start-up. She further added that the practical knowledge obtained from her work experience is an important contribution to her skill set.

Muhammad Zarrar started by introducing his non-profit established in 2019 with ten other members. Froods basically prevents food wastage in marquees and restaurants by re-distributing the excess food to the deserving. Mr. Zarrar while reflecting on the impact of working as a student stated that university provides students with the optimum support for entrepreneurship and initiatives such as his. He added that a university student is somewhat sheltered from the cut-throat competition of the professional world and is able to carry out initiatives in a relatively supportive environment which is one of the reasons that starting from a small initiative, Froods is now working on the development of a mobile application in order to initiate Food donation and collection.

Ms. Sanea who is a BBA final year student referred to her previous internships and part-time work experiences with HBL and ACCA as extremely important for practical know-how. She further emphasized the benefit of part-time field work in getting a sense of direction regarding one's expertise and strengths. Moreover, she mentioned how her own initiative which started during the 3rd year of her higher education helped her learn work-life balance and time management.

Next, Jamal Nasir asked the panel's opinion on the cultural belief of part-time work's primary motivation being money, to which Ms. Sanea replied that this is a short-sighted approach. She explained the importance of working as a student since it greatly contributes to expanding one's network, navigating the market and communicating effectively. Hence, arguing that the monetary benefit should not be the prime driving force because in the long run this experience embeds skills, crucial for one's professional career.

Ms. Aalina added that she learnt PR, customer service and effective problem solving from her work experience which are hugely beneficial. Mr. Zarrar further contributed to the debate with the significance of learning to establish and sustain an initiative. He said that dealing with stake holders, marketing a product or brand and the administration of it is a crucial learning experience and any initiative that brings one closer to this is valuable. Moreover, he said that even though he is working in a non-profit start-up, obtaining sponsorships in addition to donations brought him closer to the

consumer wants and market competition mindset hence providing a skillset that cannot necessarily be learnt within the protected environment of universities.

While discussing the society's role and any hurdles or discrimination faced by the panel, Ms Saneea pointed out the stigma attached to odd-jobs in our country but insisted that rising above this perception is important in gaining the practical skills that are extremely beneficial in the long-term. Furthermore, Ms. Aalina shared her experience regarding the gender discrimination she had to face; the vendors and packagers were usually men and would not take women seriously which ended up delaying their work and producing poor quality end results. She added that she works with very selective people with the constant support and presence of her father during business engagements which poses to be a problem for the general female workforce. Lastly, Mr. Zarrar added that the challenges a non-profit organization faces are not different from other organizations since he must work on equal terms and provide incentives to people for support.

In the end, the panel's concluding remarks consisted of part-time work being essential for a head-start into practical life meanwhile learning work-life balance and the significance of being driven by honesty and ambition.