

Aditi Sabbarwal

Short Bio

Aditi Sabbarwal, born and brought up in Delhi, an alumna of The Shri Ram School, Indraprastha College for Women (University of Delhi) a double post-graduate with one Masters in Political Science from Arts Faculty, University of Delhi & the other in Social Work from Delhi School of Social Work, University of Delhi, has been working in the development sector since 2011. She is a very hard working and a diligent worker who believes in herself and empathises with the underprivileged people of the society. Aditi has a rich experience of working in the livelihood sector primarily with women. She has formed Self-help groups of the women living in the Dasna villages.

Aditi worked with the Indian artisans and craft groups whereby she organized Entrepreneurship Development trainings for them to help them understand the nitty-grities of their business and provided them with marketing space. She has managed CSR projects of HCCBPL (Coca-Cola), MSDF and ACCOR group of Hotels, during her work tenure of more than six years with different NGOs.

In 2015 Aditi joined the UNHCR Project whereby she worked towards sustainable livelihoods of the refugees, living in Delhi. Her significant work under this project has been initiating a catering group – ILHAM Afghan Cuisine for the afghan refugee single mothers, living in Delhi. The first experiment of their culinary skills was at the Crossing Boundaries exhibition at Dastkar, New Delhi, in Sept 2015. The positive feedback received by the women at the fest gave them a boost and encouraged them to become a part of the Catering group which gave them hope that they will be able to earn a livelihood in Delhi. This way the group came into existence. The word 'ILHAM' means positivity and the women chose this name because they feel that their life has been overshadowed by threats, negativity and cruelty. For them ILHAM was a way to find a ray of hope and positivity in their lives! Initially, the group began with 04 Afghan refugee women, later on joined by 03 more women. One of the member feels that "ILHAM is better than a medicine to her". Because of her work, she was nominated for the Nansen Refugee Award in 2016

In May 2017, she got selected in the UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) India, as Senior Livelihoods Assistant and will continue working in the field of livelihoods with the refugees and with ILHAM. In Aug 2017, she formed another catering group with the Somalian Single Mothers, namely- MACQUUL Somalian Cuisine, and has also formed a Handicrafts group among the Afghan Refugee women living in the city.

Since May 2016, the ILHAM Afghan Cuisine has received media coverage from national and international media houses (BBC, Hindustan Times, Times of India, Gulf News-Dubai, Kabul Times, My Pakistan, Zee News and many more) which has helped the group gain recognition and they now receive orders from the local customers.

On March 22nd 2018, the ILHAM Afghan Cuisine was awarded as the 'Best Women Food Entrepreneurs' at the Dettol Delhi Street Food Awards organized by Delhi Food Walks in association with the American Centre.

Because of her work, she was invited by various NGOs, colleges and schools to motivate the women beneficiaries and the students towards pursuing livelihood options and development sector respectively. She was also invited by US Embassy as 'an Emerging Leader' to one of their event. On the occasion of International Women's Day this year, Aditi was invited as a chief guest by an artisan craft group – DISHA Shekhawati in Churu, Rajasthan and was also invited by the British High Commissioner for their event 'Women Inspire'.

A link to some of the media coverage's (you may also google the same for more links):

<https://yourstory.com/2017/08/startup-ilham-afghan-refugee-single-mothers/> -Yourstory, Aug 2017

<http://www.indianwomenblog.org/read-how-aditi-sabharwal-is-making-afghan-women-refugee-cook-a-successful-career-for-themselves/>- Indian Women Blog, Sept 2017.