



Rockefeller Foundation Innovation Award Introduction of Dr. Sania Nishtar

Ali Hassan is an eight-year-old boy from Pakistan. Born into an impoverished family, Ali was forced to do kitchen work for pocket change...until, one day on his way home, he was struck by a car. Thankfully, he survived the accident. But not uninjured. And in a nation where three-quarters of the population is uninsured... where out-of-pocket medical expenses often drive the sick into irreversible poverty ...that Ali Hassan could have his fractured leg repaired seemed all but impossible.

And it would have been...if it wasn't for our next Innovation Award winner.

Since she left medical school, SaniaNishtar has had one life goal: to, quote, “uphold the voice of the underprivileged and make a broader based impact.”

And she has.

In her native Pakistan, Dr. Nishtar is renowned as a visionary who is transforming the field of healthcare. She is the founder and president of Heartfile, an NGO that finds the synergies between the private and public sectors...and sees how they can align in new ways to broaden access to health care financing and critically needed health care services.

This kind of thought leadership in revolutionizing what are called, “Mixed Health Systems” has been the hallmark of Dr. Nishtar’s career. It led her to found Pakistan’s Health Policy Forum. It is the subject of her new book, Choked Pipes, the first comprehensive assessment of her country’s health care system.

And Dr. Nishtar’s bold thinking has helped save lives. To give you a specific example, her organization is using existing mobile technology in an innovative way. Thanks to Sania’s efforts, doctors can verify a patient’s poverty status, streamline philanthropic donations, and get people like Ali Hassan the life-changing and life-saving medical care they need.

And with Heartfile, they can do it within 72 hours.

[Pause]

Headlines were made earlier this year when the Pakistan Medical Association released its annual

report, which noted the dreadful statistic that a child in Pakistan dies every minute of every day from preventable, treatable diseases, and that 400,000 infants die each year before they reach their first birthday.

Many organizations and individuals are working to save lives in Pakistan. But we recognize Dr. Nishtar this evening not only for her many specific contributions to this cause...not only for her impact on individual lives...but for the innovative ways she has brought together people, organizations, and technology to reform an entire nation's healthcare industry.

One of Dr. Nishtar's colleagues has described her as "an extraordinary ambassador for her country." And so, tonight...as we celebrate her work to transform Pakistan's health care system...we also look forward to how her vision might extend to the rest of the world.

Please join me in congratulating and welcoming to the podium our next Innovation Award recipient, Dr. SaniaNishtar.

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