Beyond the Classroom

Learn | Travel | Lead

THE BTC NEWSLETTER

Schools Reached 300+

Cities Engaged (in Pakistan) 7+

Countries Involved 6+

Youth Impacted 34,000+

Educators Trained 1,000+

$210,000

Scholarships awarded in 2025 to 60 people



In this edition of our newsletter, we bring you stories of inspiration, impact, and innovation from our programs across **Pakistan and beyond**. This is your window into the changemaking journeys of thousands of young people we proudly work with. Thank you for being part of our growing **BTC community.**

SPECIAL EDITION 2026

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Beyond The Classroom Education

The World Is Young. And It Is Already Here.

Today, nearly half of the global population is under the age of 30. In Pakistan, that number is even more striking – over 60% of our population is under 30. We are not preparing for a youthful future. We are living inside it.

The depth of scholarship in great academic spaces has always been built on something simple yet profound: curious minds gathering together. Young people absorb existing breakthroughs, challenging assumptions, testing ideas against one another and in doing so, building new ones. That is how knowledge evolves. That is how societies progress.

Pakistan, for a variety of geopolitical reasons, has faced the misfortune of experiencing limited and inconsistent global academic exchange. The free and frequent influx of scholarship, perspective, and collaborative discovery has not always flowed into our classrooms as it once did.

While we continue to hope for the day when such exchange becomes seamless again, we cannot afford to wait.

Beyond the Classroom Education exists to bridge this gap.

We search for some of the most dynamic, intellectually vibrant spaces in the world – spaces that bring together young people of the highest leadership potential from across borders – and we ensure that the brightest young Pakistanis are present in those rooms. We create pathways for them to travel, to learn, to challenge and be challenged, to build friendships across lines that politics often hardens.

Because the challenges awaiting humanity are not abstract.

Polarisation. Climate crisis. Technological disruption. Social fragmentation. These are not tomorrow's headlines. They are today's lived realities.

And yet, when young people are brought together intentionally, something powerful happens.

Rumi Kabir Ali, a member of Pakistan's national robotics team, described his experience as learning gratitude, empathy, and the courage to step beyond his comfort zone. That courage later led him to deliver a TED Talk on Pakistan-India friendship – a powerful reminder that youth leadership can shape national narratives.

For Mariam Ahmed, her journey began with confronting something deeply personal – her relationship with anger. Through structured mentorship and immersive global exposure, she gained not just confidence, but language – language to understand herself, to navigate emotional complexity, and to lead with reflection rather than reaction.

Ali Haris, once reserved and introspective, now leads Wonder Why, an international dialogue initiative serving underprivileged schools. He speaks about leadership not as a spotlight, but as initiative, listening, and creating space for others to thrive. His transformation was not accidental – it was cultivated through repeated exposure to diverse cohorts, mentorship, and dialogue.

These are not isolated stories. They are patterns.

When young people are trusted with responsibility, given exposure to global perspectives, and supported by strong mentorship, they rise – not just individually, but collectively.

The world is young.

Our responsibility is to ensure that our youth are not just participants in that world, but architects of it.

At Beyond the Classroom Education, we are not simply running programs.
We are building bridges of scholarship.
We are expanding the geography of possibility.
We are investing in the generation that is already shaping our present.
And we are only just beginning.



Qasim Aslam
CEO, Beyond the Classroom Education
'Written by me. Polished with ChatGPT. The thinking, heart, and intent are fully ours'



UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AT BTC



Seeds of Peace (SOP) International Camp

A three-week transformative leadership camp relocating to Devon, England, gathering youth from conflict-affected areas. The program empowers participants from diverse backgrounds with the skills to lead difficult conversations and bridge divides within their schools and communities in an increasingly polarized world. Attendees will engage in dialogue, leadership development, and a variety of traditional summer camp activities, such as sports and arts, creating a holistic and enriching experience.

PGL This year **Beyond the Classroom** is proud to partner with **PGL (UK)**

For students aged 14-17, PGL trips provide structured, safe and supported environments where young people stay together away from home, take part in exciting physical and educational activities, build confidence, teamwork and social skills, and create lasting memories. PGL works closely with schools and group leaders to ensure programs meet educational and developmental goals in a supportive setting.

Program Highlights



Regional Leadership Camp (RLC)

SRI LANKA

THAILAND

Participants in the South Asia Camp journey alongside a group of young people from around the region representing different backgrounds, identity groups, and lived experiences. Youth come away prepared to engage in increasingly rigorous and immersive Seeds of Peace programs that challenge and support them to deepen their engagement in their community and mobilize to create more just and inclusive societies.. Our flagship leadership experience, RLC, brings together youth from across South Asia for a 10-day camp.



Negotiation and Mediation for Young Leaders Program (NYL)

DUBAI

SCOTLAND

A four-day immersive Masterclass, held by Professors from Harvard, that teaches students negotiation and mediation skills to address conflicts. With a strong emphasis on bridge-building and global understanding.

Dialogue Academy (DA)

Dialogue Academy Course: a digital, facilitator-led program designed to equip teenagers with tools to explore identity, bias, empathy, and critical thinking. With a strong track record of partnering with 45+ schools across 15+ cities from both countries, India and Pakistan, Dialogue Academy has demonstrated significant impact in providing youth with practical leadership tools, fostering safe, supportive communities, and cultivating a generation that embraces differences, fosters understanding, and leads with compassion.



Adaptive Leadership Workshop 2025

The Adaptive Leadership Alumni Workshop was a 3-day residential program designed for Seeds of Peace alumni and other college students and graduates (ages 18-25) who are ready to deepen their leadership journey. Rooted in the Adaptive Leadership framework, the workshop helps young leaders build the ability to navigate complex challenges, mobilize communities, work through uncertainty, and lead with empathy and clarity. The program was facilitated by **Hasham Nasir**, Teaching Fellow at the LUMS School of Education, whose work focuses on gender, media, and education for social change.

UK

TURKEY



PAST PROGRAMS

SSCCA
Climate-focused accelerator empowering South Asian youth in university to lead climate justice dialogue and actions.

SIBA <> Vanderbilt University
A collaborative initiative strengthening higher education in Pakistan through STEM pedagogy and academic leadership, in partnership with Vanderbilt University (US), Sukkur IBA University, and Beyond the Classroom.

ED Travel Educational expeditions that combine travel, knowledge, and personal growth.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact

Nabhia Asghar

2020-2023

- Social Impact Professional and BTC Youth Programs Facilitator
- Research Fellow at ISSRC (USA); completed Bachelor's degree from FCCU
- Co-created the community-based project "Hunurman"
- Experience with UNDP, Aga Khan Foundation (Kenya).

- Attended Bulandi Fellowship - fully funded program
- Went to USA as a Counsellor (paid opportunity)
- Dialogue Academy Facilitator (paid opportunity)



" I learned that empathy is not a reaction; it is a choice you make, even in difficult moments."

Some experiences stay with you not because they are short-lived, but because they grow with you. For Nabiha, her journey began at nineteen with her first international exposure, a moment that quietly reshaped her sense of direction. What stood out most was not just traveling or meeting people from different communities, but being part of a cohort that felt deeply supportive, guided by mentorship that arrived when she needed it most.

That early experience became a turning point. It taught her how to listen actively, sit with emotions, and approach conversations with care. These lessons mattered beyond the program itself, especially during a difficult time in her personal life giving her the confidence to move forward with clarity and intention. The cohort, she reflects, remains a core memory of growth and learning.

A few years later, another international experience deepened what she had already begun to practice. By then, Nabiha had learned to hold space not only for her own perspective but for others as well. She became more attuned to how empathy can build trust, strengthen bonds, and help people feel seen, even in challenging conversations. This shift shaped how she interacted with others and how she understood leadership.

These moments collectively redirected her path. Mentorship and exposure helped her imagine a career rooted in service, where empathy is not just a value but a skill used daily. Today, as both a professional in the development sector and a facilitator, Nabiha continues to apply these lessons navigating emotions thoughtfully, fostering dialogue, and creating spaces where others feel confident and supported.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact

Ali Haris

2017-2025

- Founder, Wonder Why (an international dialogue initiative providing social education sessions in underprivileged schools)
- Seeds of Peace International Camp Counsellor
- Seeds of Peace Regional Leadership Camp Counsellor
- Virtual National Camp Counsellor
- BTC Dialogue Academy Facilitator
- Computer Science student, LUMS

- **Went to USA as a participant on 90% scholarship**
- **Went to Sri Lanka as a participant on 80% scholarship**
- **Went to Turkey as a participant on 100% scholarship**



" Leadership is not about being in the spotlight–it's about taking initiative, listening, and creating spaces where others can thrive. "

Ali's journey with BTC and Seeds of Peace began in 2017 and spanned multiple programs across countries and formats, from the USA to virtual spaces during COVID. For a naturally reserved and introspective individual, these experiences were transformative. They reshaped his understanding of leadership, teaching him that true leadership is inclusive, values-driven, and grounded in empathy.

One pivotal moment came while leading a session for his own organization. A quiet participant approached him afterward and said they looked up to him, even asking if they could mention his name in a school presentation. "I never imagined I would be that person for someone else," Ali recalls. "That moment convinced me to continue." Through active listening, a skill emphasized throughout his BTC and Seeds of Peace journey, Ali learned to understand people beyond their words. In classrooms, dialogue sessions, or community spaces, he listens for perspectives, emotions, and unspoken concerns before responding. This approach allows him to navigate conflict thoughtfully, build trust, and design solutions that address real human needs rather than assumptions.

Ali's engagement with diverse communities strengthened his ability to communicate confidently across backgrounds, turning technical knowledge into human-centered problem solving. He now approaches society with a mindset of inclusion, choosing to understand context before judgment, creating space for voices that might otherwise be overlooked. His work through Wonder Why, mentorship, and facilitation reflects a lasting commitment to social responsibility, where meaningful change comes from empathy, dialogue, and consistent action.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact

Sana Kardar

2006

- Strategic Policy and Communications Advisor, British Parliament
- Research Fellow, Imperial College London
- MSc, Bioscience Futures, Imperial College London
- Civil Servant, UK Government
- Completed executive programmes at MIT, Oxford, and McKinsey Forward
- Winner, Femtech Imperial Startup Sprint and Crick x Cambridge Hackathon
- Recipient of the "She Inspires" Award at the House of Lords
- Recognized as Best Mentor, Cohort by Pine UK.

Went to USA as a participant and later as Peer support on 100% scholarship



" Coexistence stopped being a concept. It became my way of life."

Sana joined Seeds of Peace at the age of thirteen, curious to understand people beyond headlines and borders. She expected intensive dialogue every day, but what she found was a mix of teamwork, play, and living alongside peers from around the globe. One unforgettable moment was running into the camp lake together – in that instant, nationality, religion, and differences melted away. They were simply human.

The camp instilled values that continue to guide her life and career. "Compassion is noticing someone smiling and still understanding they might be struggling," she reflects. Along with active listening and collaboration, this principle shapes how she mentors young people, conducts research, and contributes to global policy. These principles underpinned her experiences and achievements: designing and delivering lectures on evidence-led storytelling at Corpus Christi College, winning gold in debates and poetry recitation, publishing in the Crisis Response Journal on women's health equity, contributing to global policy frameworks at Pine Global, and organizing symposiums on AI in Healthcare and networking events at the Palace of Westminster.

Seeds of Peace also gave her exposure to diversity, forming lifelong friendships, including with Indian peers and her Malaysian Indian partner. For Sana, coexistence became a lived practice rather than a theory. Today, as a biomedical scientist, mentor, and advocate, she continues to champion empathy, understanding, and collaboration in every sphere.

Her advice to future participants is simple: "Come with an open mind. The world needs more people willing to listen."

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact

Uswa Zainab

2013-2020

- SQA Engineer at Dubizzle Labs
- Head Counselor at Seeds of Peace Regional Leadership Camp
- Seeds of Peace International Camp Counsellor
- Future Leader Program Mentor
- BTC Dialogue Academy Facilitator
- Designer and Implementer of BTC Social Impact Projects
- Pursuing Computer Sciences

- **Went to USA as a participant on 50% scholarship**
- **Went to Sri Lanka as a participant on 80% scholarship**



" I have seen the balance of being competent, confident, and professional while being kind, soft, and empathetic... and I want to continue modeling that in my life."

Uswa's BTC journey began at the age of 13 and has shaped her growth in ways that continue to guide her today. She entered her first international camp as a teenager who wanted to speak up but often lacked the confidence to do so, especially in unfamiliar spaces. Being surrounded by counselors and leaders who were comfortable in their own skin became a turning point, inspiring her to embrace her voice and engage more openly with the world around her. That exposure sparked a lasting shift in how she saw herself and her ability to contribute meaningfully.

One of the most formative moments of this journey came when Uswa led a social impact project at a low-income school during her mid-teens. Drawing on what she had observed at camp, she designed sessions that encouraged students to explore their identities, practice empathy, and think critically through creative activities. Guiding students through play, discussion, and self-expression deepened her belief in leadership that is rooted in care, inclusion, and responsibility toward others.

This perspective has shaped both her personal values and professional ambitions. While pursuing a degree in computer science, Uswa developed a strong interest in using technology for social impact. She hopes to create systems and solutions that support public and social sectors, blending her technical skills with her desire to contribute to the greater good.

Her experiences also expanded her worldview, helping her navigate cultural differences and complex global issues with curiosity and empathy. She reflects, "There's so much gray in the world... not everything is black and white. Meeting people from Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and the US opened my eyes to perspectives I had not considered before."

Today, the confidence, empathy, and global awareness she gained through BTC experiences continue to shape how she shows up in academic spaces, professional environments, and community work. Reflecting on her journey, Uswa encourages future participants to step out of their bubble, embrace new perspectives, and trust the process, believing that these experiences have the power to open minds and discover your own potential in ways you cannot imagine.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Student at Union College, USA
- Vice President of her class
- Active Member, University Newspaper Society & Film Club

Went to USA as a participant on 37% scholarship



"Seeds of Peace taught me that inclusivity is not just a value; it is a way to see people for who they are, not where they come from."

At 18, Areeba joined the Seeds of Peace International Camp during a period of personal uncertainty. Homesick, nervous, and unsure of herself, she found support from counselors and peers that helped her grow emotionally, socially, and confidently express her voice. Through dialogue groups and shared experiences, she discovered the power of speaking openly and the importance of listening to others' perspectives.

A day that stands out in her memory is Memorial Day at camp. After a reflective ceremony honoring those who had passed, the heavy emotions of the day were unexpectedly lifted when she and her friends ran into the rain to jump in puddles. The spontaneous joy quickly spread, drawing the entire camp community into laughter and connection.

The camp also shaped how Areeba engages with her broader community. She learned to move beyond judging people based on race, religion, or background, and instead focus on perspectives and lived experiences. Inclusivity became a guiding principle, helping her create welcoming spaces in her college and beyond.

Her experience also shaped her academic and extracurricular journey. While she focuses on computer science and mathematics, she is drawn to film and journalism as a minor, seeing them as avenues to share stories, amplify diverse perspectives, and inspire positive change.

Areeba hopes to return as a camp counselor one day, passing on the guidance and support she received to future participants. For her, Seeds of Peace is not just a program; it is a community, a family, and a foundation for growth that continues to shape the way she lives, learns, and leads.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact

Mariam Ahmed

2019-2020

- Associate, Learning and Development, CureMD
- BSc Management Sciences, LUMS (CGPA 3.65)
- Dean's Honoured List graduate

- Went to Sri Lanka as a participant on 55% scholarship
- Went to USA as a participant on 64% scholarship
- Went to Turkey as a participant on 100% scholarship
- Went to Sri Lanka as a Group Challenge Counsellor (paid opportunity)



"These programs gave me the language to understand myself - and the courage to grow."

Mariam's journey with experiential learning began at age 15 with Beyond the Classroom's Future Leaders Program in Sri Lanka. It was her first exposure to youth leadership spaces and sparked a deeply personal realization: confronting her complicated relationship with anger. That moment of self-awareness set her on a path of emotional growth and reflection.

After returning home, she designed and led an empathy-building program for a low-income school - her first self-initiated experience in curriculum and learning design. This work became a turning point, shaping both her values and her future career in learning and development.

Later that year, Mariam attended the Seeds of Peace International Camp in Maine. Surrounded by a culture of unconditional acceptance, she found the safety to acknowledge her truth and begin her journey toward recovery from an eating disorder. The experience also gave her lifelong friendships across borders, including her closest friend from India.

One memory that stands out is a moment when a counselor chose empathy over structure during a hockey activity, encouraging participants to release what they were carrying instead. That simple act captured the essence of Seeds of Peace - meeting people where they are.

Through these programs, Mariam became more empathetic, confident, and self-assured. Today, she hopes to bring the same human-centered philosophy into corporate spaces, creating learning environments where people are encouraged to grow, reflect, and feel seen.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact

Muhammad Usama

2018-2022

- Studying at the University of Providence, Manitoba, Canada
- Running a startup for ed tech service to university students (UAE-based)
- Facilitated multiple batches of Seeds of Peace Dialogue Academy over two years

- **Attended Bulandi Fellowship - fully funded program**
- **Dialogue Academy Facilitator (paid opportunity)**



"Bulandi completely changed my life perspective - empathy and kindness became the core of who I am."

Usama joined the Bulandi Program in 2018 at the age of 19, a moment that would fundamentally reshape both his personality and career direction. The program's focus on empathy, critical thinking, identity, and entrepreneurship introduced him to ways of thinking he had never encountered before, especially coming from a strict, government education background.

Before Bulandi, Usama describes himself as rigid and self-focused. Through the program, he experienced a complete shift in perspective, grounding his identity in empathy and kindness. These values became central to how he viewed people and the world, guiding his interactions and personal growth long after the program ended.

Professionally, Bulandi played a key role in his transition from mechanical engineering to education, facilitation, product management, and entrepreneurship. Reconnecting with BTC in 2022, Usama returned as a Dialogue Academy Facilitator, where he facilitated multiple batches over two years. One moment that stayed with him was watching an introverted student, who had been bullied, gain the confidence to share his perspective openly. The student later told Usama that he had changed his outlook on life - an experience that reaffirmed Usama's belief in empathy-driven education.

Being part of diverse cohorts also changed how Usama engaged with society. He became more confident in expressing his ideas, communicating across social and educational differences, and no longer felt intimidated by perceived gaps. Today, as a student at the University of Providence and while running an edtech startup based in the UAE, Usama continues to carry empathy as a guiding principle in his work and life. He credits BTC and its mentors for playing a major role in shaping the journey that continues to define him.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact

Aleezay Amir

2023-2024

- Student at Parsons School of Design, New York, USA.

- Went to USA as a participant on 31% scholarship
- Dialogue Academy Facilitator (paid opportunity)



"Seeds of Peace taught me how to remain human in disagreement and find growth in moments of uncertainty."

Aleeza arrived at Seeds of Peace with assumptions about people, conflict, and dialogue, but what she encountered challenged everything she thought she knew. She was placed in conversations with peers whose histories, identities, and realities were completely different from her own. Topics like conflict, grief, and responsibility were not solved in neat conclusions but explored through honest dialogue. Over time, these conversations humanized narratives she had only seen from a distance and taught her to listen with intention and speak with care.

One memorable moment came early in the program when she realized she had been performing, trying to be someone she thought she should be. While others shared authentic connections, she struggled to engage. That night, she reflected and chose to be herself. From that moment, she began to interact openly and confidently, discovering that authenticity opened the door to meaningful connections.

Seeds of Peace also influenced her academic perspective. As a fine arts student, Aleeza initially focused strictly on realism, but the program helped her embrace negative space, vulnerability, and emotional depth. Her art now reflects her personal growth, emotional expression, and the lessons of holding space for complexity. Beyond her creative work, Seeds of Peace shaped her understanding of conflict, teaching her to recognize nuance, see gray areas, and approach disagreements with empathy.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Head of Academic Research, NJVSMB
- MPhil in Education, Leadership and Management, LUMS
- Leads institutional partnerships and supports students in accessing global education opportunities, including fully funded international scholarships.

Attended Bulandi Fellowship - fully funded program



"Bulandi gave me a safe space to be myself - to speak, listen, and grow alongside people who truly understood one another."

For Yusra, the Bulandi Fellowship arrived at a time when connection mattered most. Taking place during the uncertainty of COVID-19, the program became more than just a learning space; it became a community. Through open conversations around topics such as feminism, trauma, and personal experiences and shared reflections, Bulandi offered her a sense of belonging.

Being part of Bulandi had a profound impact on Yusra's personal growth. Surrounded by people who shared similar values and mindsets, she found the confidence to express herself openly. At the time, she was also studying at LUMS, and the experience complemented her academic journey by encouraging reflection, self-awareness, and emotional expression.

Professionally, the fellowship helped her clarify her aspirations. Through interactions with career coaches, counsellors, and fellows working in education, she gained clarity and motivation to pursue this path more intentionally. These conversations helped her envision herself contributing meaningfully to the field, and she continues to seek guidance from the community she built during the program.

Coming from Chitral and living in Lahore, Yusra had often encountered assumptions about her background. The fellowship allowed her to challenge these narratives and engage with people from diverse regions and cultures. Through these interactions, she learned to navigate differences with greater confidence and openness.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Member of Pakistan's national robotics team, represented Pakistan at the World Robotics Olympiad in Singapore.

Went to USA as a participant on 40% scholarship



"Seeds of Peace changed how I see people and myself-it taught me gratitude, empathy, and the courage to step beyond my comfort zone."

At 14, Rumi attended the International Camp, an experience he describes as life-changing. Being part of an open and accepting environment challenged how he viewed others and encouraged him to reflect inwardly on his own assumptions and privileges.

A defining moment for Rumi came during a dialogue circle activity that highlighted differences in family backgrounds. This experience helped him recognize his own privilege and showed him that strong bonds can be built regardless of social or economic differences. It reshaped how he approaches relationships, with greater empathy and understanding.

Before the program, Rumi described himself as introverted. The supportive environment at Seeds of Peace helped him become more open to participation and engagement, gradually expanding his comfort zone and confidence.

Rumi's interests in engineering led him toward robotics, and the values he gained from the program, particularly gratitude and empathy continue to guide how he works with others. These lessons also gave him the confidence to deliver a TED Talk on Pakistan-India friendship in 2025, where he shared his experiences and reflections with his community.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Research Director at a medical-focused NGO; engaged in youth leadership and service initiatives.
- Community Service Representative, School Council
- BTC Youth Leadership Ambassador

Went to Sri Lanka as a participant on 57% scholarship



"Disagreement doesn't mean disrespect."

Afraz attended the Seeds of Peace Regional Leadership Camp at just 14 years old, an experience he describes as life-changing. Before the program, he was a perfectionist who struggled with frustration and found it difficult to accept perspectives different from his own. Through dialogue and shared experiences with a diverse group, he learned that multiple viewpoints can coexist without being right or wrong.

One of his most memorable moments was the closing circle, where 50 participants reflected together in an emotional farewell. The reminder that those exact people would never be in the same room again made the moment deeply meaningful.

A key lesson Afraz took away was learning to "own your narrative without weaponizing it," helping him engage with others more openly and respectfully. Since returning, he has stepped confidently into leadership, founding a medical-focused NGO, leading flood relief fundraising through his school council, and facilitating Seeds of Peace sessions in schools to pass on the program's values.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Community Coordinator and Teacher
- HSC Graduate

- Went to USA as a participant on 75% scholarship
- Went to Dubai as a participant on 80% scholarship



" Being in a safe and open environment helped me trust my voice. I no longer ignore my instincts; I act on them with confidence."

Before joining the Seeds of Peace programs, Ilham was deeply aware of the world around her; its challenges, tensions, and injustices but she often kept her thoughts to herself. She recognized her potential, yet hesitated to step forward or claim leadership. That changed when she entered a space built on dialogue, trust, and mutual respect.

She describes her experiences as transformative milestones that reshaped how she sees herself and her role in the world. For the first time, she felt safe enough to speak openly, question assumptions, and act on what felt right to her.

One moment that remains especially close to her heart is the intercultural night at the international camp. Standing before peers from across the globe, Ilham proudly represented her culture, not as a quiet observer, but as a confident participant in a shared global space. It was a turning point that affirmed the value of both identity and dialogue.

Through these experiences, Ilham learned to see dialogue not just as conversation, but as a powerful tool for peaceful conflict resolution – a value that deeply resonated with the principles she had grown up with in her Ismaili community. Today, she practices this learning actively. As a community coordinator and teacher, she creates spaces where others feel heard, encourages equal participation, and models thoughtful listening over reactive disagreement.

Voices from the BTC Community

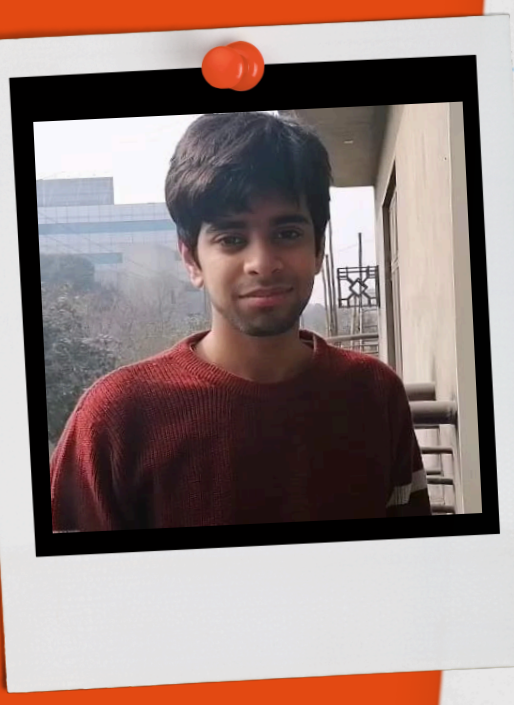
Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- National Winner, Pakistan Young Physicists' Tournament
- Math Club President
- STEM team lead

Went to USA as a participant on 88% scholarship

" Learning to see challenges as 'us versus the problem' changed how I lead, learn, and collaborate."



When Anns arrived at the Seeds of Peace International Camp, the experience felt surreal. The towering trees, clean air, and star-filled skies were worlds apart from life in Lahore. He felt out of place at first, unfamiliar, almost like an outsider, yet welcomed in a way that immediately created a sense of safety.

What left the deepest impact was not the setting, but the people. The camp fostered an environment built on care, respect, and openness, where difficult conversations could happen without turning into conflict. Ann learned to approach disagreements as shared challenges "us versus the problem," rather than battles to defend personal opinions. Even when views differed, there was a shared understanding that everyone was guided by the intention to do the right thing.

One moment captured this sense of trust perfectly. Despite being afraid of deep water, Anns decided to try kneeboarding on the camp lake, encouraged by the support of his peers. While others fell quickly, he stayed on the board for several minutes, returning proud and surprised by his own courage.

After returning home, Anns carried these lessons into his academic life. As Math Club President, he applies collaborative problem-solving in STEM spaces, encouraging teams to evaluate ideas openly rather than argue over them. A simple habit he adopted from camp was giving more compliments that strengthened his leadership and relationships.

Since then, Anns has led teams to win the national round of the Pakistan Young Physicists Tournament and compete internationally at the Asian Regional Space Settlement Design Competition. Through the Seeds of Peace alumni community which he describes as a family he has also conducted STEM workshops for children at SOS Children's Villages.

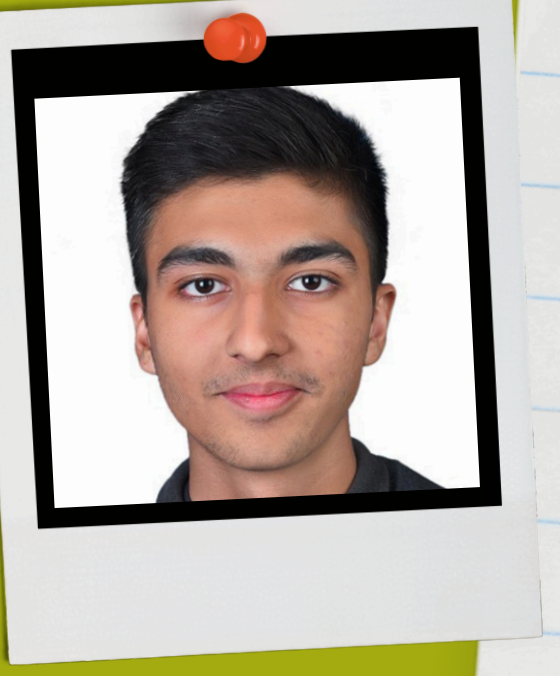
For Ann, Seeds of Peace became "training wheels for real life," shaping how he listens, leads, and collaborates – lessons that continue to guide him well beyond the camp.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Founder - tuition academy supporting local youth
- First-generation recipient of a fully funded program scholarship through Seeds of Peace
- Went to Sri Lanka as a participant on 94% scholarship
- Went to Dubai as a participant on 80% scholarship



"NYL and RLC showed me that friendship and collaboration can transcend borders, religion, and rivalry."

Tulhaa attended NYL Dubai at 15, followed by the Seeds of Peace Regional Leadership Camp in Sri Lanka at 16. These programs introduced him to dialogue-based learning, cross-cultural communication, and leadership skills, helping him overcome his introversion. He now speaks confidently in front of others, expresses his opinions freely, and approaches discussions with empathy and open-mindedness.

One of his most memorable moments was a group discussion at RLC, where Pakistani and Indian participants worked together on a time-bound challenge. Collaborating across borders reinforced Tulhaa's understanding that friendships can thrive beyond nationality, religion, or rivalry.

The programs inspired him to give back to his community. He founded a tuition academy with his mother and brother to mentor local students, particularly in areas lacking guidance. The skills he gained-negotiation, dialogue, and public speaking-continue to shape how he interacts with others and approaches problems thoughtfully.

Being selected for NYL on a fully funded scholarship was one of the proudest moments of his life. Tulhaa emphasizes that while technical skills are important, the soft skills acquired through BTC programs such as communication, leadership, and cross-cultural collaboration, have been his most valuable takeaway, guiding both his personal growth and his vision for the future.

Voices from the BTC Community

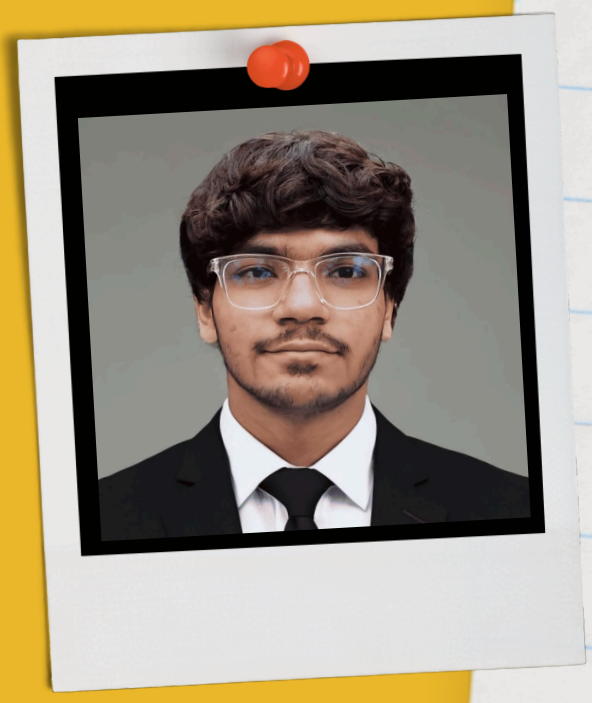
Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Alumnus, Yale Entrepreneurial Society High School Fellowship | UPG Champion
- Former Vice President, Sindh Chapter, Youth Organization Pakistan

Went to Sri Lanka as a participant on 42% scholarship

"RLC completely changed how I see people, and myself."



Piyush joined the Regional Leadership Camp in Sri Lanka at age 17, initially with university applications in mind. What he didn't expect was how deeply the experience would shape his outlook and future. In just ten days, the camp challenged his assumptions and shifted his career interests from engineering toward leadership, international relations, and business management.

Living and learning alongside participants from diverse backgrounds helped Piyush unlearn biases and build a strong sense of unity. One of his favorite memories — a late-night conversation in his room after the color games that turned into a camp-wide inside joke — perfectly captured the trust and connection formed during the program.

Since RLC, Piyush has become deeply involved in youth leadership, organizing initiatives, attending conferences, and building meaningful connections across communities. He credits the program with helping him grow into a more open, empathetic, and confident leader.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Author of a research article titled “Has Social Media Undermined Democracy?”
- Winner of the Kangaroo Maths Contest (multiple times)

Went to Sri Lanka as a participant on 77% scholarship



"Seeds of Peace taught me to think before I act and to understand how my choices affect others."

Umer attended the Seeds of Peace Regional Leadership Camp at fifteen, an experience that changed how he understood power, responsibility, and human connection. A dialogue activity at camp introduced a lesson that stayed with him: actions taken without reflection can harm others. From that moment, he began thinking more carefully about his choices and how values like honesty and integrity should be practiced, not imposed.

The camp was equally defined by friendship and joy. One memory that stands out is a rap battle during the color games, where competition dissolved into laughter when Umer found himself up against a close friend from the opposing team. For him, Seeds of Peace became a space where trust and connection mattered more than winning.

Being part of a diverse community including participants from different countries and religious backgrounds, reshaped how Umer communicates. He learned to speak thoughtfully, listen more openly, and build relationships gradually. These lessons continue to guide his interactions, and he remains in regular contact with friends he met at camp.

The experience also sharpened his sense of purpose. While Umer was already interested in physics and leadership, the program strengthened his desire to contribute meaningfully to society by applying what he learned, rather than simply holding positions of authority. Counselors like Anusha and Zahid played a key role in this journey, modeling empathy, openness, and trust. Umer recalls sharing openly with Zahid in moments of both difficulty and happiness and hopes to offer the same sense of comfort to others.

Reflecting on the journey, Umer describes Seeds of Peace as one of the most impactful experiences of his life. For him, it was not only about learning dialogue, but about becoming a more thoughtful, grounded, and responsible person—lessons he continues to carry forward.

Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact

Dawood Ahmed

2024-2025

- Asian Semi-Finalist - Asian Regional Space Settlement Design Competition - Dubai
- 1st Place Winner - Pakistan Youth Physicists Tournament
- National Representative - Member of the Pakistan Team at International Young Physicists' Tournament (IYPT)
- National Swimmer - Multiple regional and national medals

- Went to USA as a participant on 33% scholarship
- Went to Dubai as a participant on 72% scholarship
- Went to USA as a participant for Alumni program on 100% scholarship



Meeting people in real life showed me how untrue social media narratives can be. The world is far more peaceful than it looks online."

Before joining Seeds of Peace, Dawood's understanding of the world came mostly from a screen. News feeds, social media posts, and viral clips shaped how distant and divided other countries felt. Meeting people from across borders for the first time changed that almost immediately.

At the Seeds of Peace NYL, Dawood found himself in rooms filled with peers from India, Israel, the USA, and beyond. Conversations that once felt abstract online became personal and human. He realized how misleading digital narratives could be, and how similar people are once politics and headlines fade into the background. One of those early connections grew into a close friendship with an Indian participant, Auguste Atri, a bond that continues through conversations and shared memories.

What stayed with Dawood most was not just the friendships, but how they were built. Coming from a culture where disagreement often turns confrontational, he learned to slow down. Dialogue sessions pushed him to listen fully, reflect before responding, and accept being wrong without feeling threatened. Over time, patience became a habit rather than a challenge.

That shift followed him home. Dawood now approaches disagreements with calm and curiosity, choosing understanding over reaction. Whether navigating group dynamics or everyday conversations, he finds himself pausing, listening, and defusing tension rather than escalating it.

The experience also reshaped his academic direction. Once focused on engineering and physics, Dawood began thinking more deeply about global systems and cooperation. Exposure to international perspectives and collaborative problem-solving led him to place international relations and global policy at the center of his college plans, driven by a desire to contribute to a more connected world.

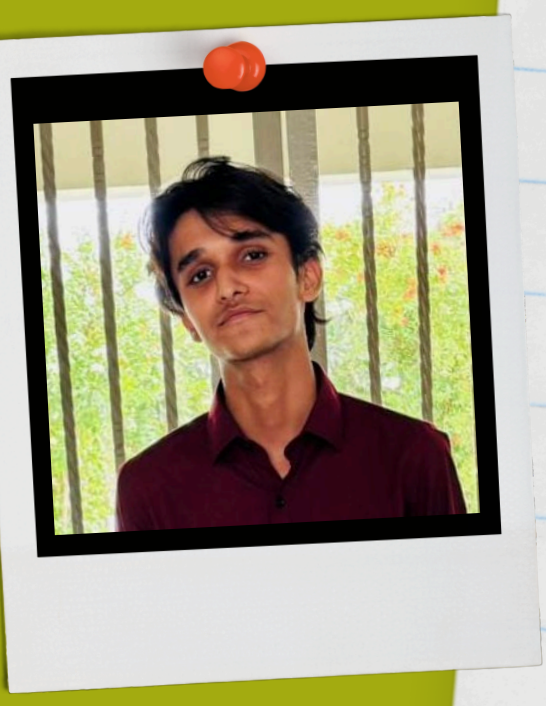
Voices from the BTC Community

Alumni stories of reflection, growth, and impact



- Won Formula Pakistan 2026 - Team lead and Design Lead
- Winner of the Best Verbal Presentation Award
- Winner of the Fastest Car Award

Went to Sri Lanka as a participant on 74% scholarship



"Listen more and speak less - it is amazing how much you can learn when you give others the space to share."

At 16, Darsh stepped into the Seeds of Peace Regional Leadership Camp in Sri Lanka, unsure what to expect. Surrounded by peers from different countries and cultures, he quickly realized that leadership was not about speaking the most; it was about knowing when to listen.

Small moments left big impressions. Sharing meals with the only two other vegetarians in the camp became a daily reminder of connection and camaraderie. He learned to appreciate every conversation, even the casual ones, as a chance to understand perspectives beyond his own.

The program also taught him to stand firm and set boundaries. Saying "no" when something did not feel right became a source of confidence, helping him navigate friendships and group dynamics with self-assurance.

Seeds of Peace helped Darsh see failure differently too. After being rejected from the Young Leaders Conference in 2023, his acceptance to RLC proved that persistence and growth go hand in hand.

Now, Darsh carries these lessons every day approaching people thoughtfully, listening deeply, and embracing challenges with confidence. He continues to pursue his dream of becoming a mechanical engineer and remains inspired by the friendships and insights from his Seeds of Peace experience.