

# Young Champions of Maternal Health

**Faisal Siraj (Pakistan)**

**with Ashoka Fellow Lucy Attah Auwalu (Nigeria)**

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## Faisal Siraj

A medical professional in Pakistan, Faisal is changing the maternal health field in his country by tapping into a poorly-utilized resource: medical interns. He believes the chronic shortage of health workers in rural Pakistan could be lessened significantly if the tasks of medical interns were shifted from assisting Lady Health Workers in central hospitals to working directly with rural women in village-based centers. Faisal intends to work with policymakers in the newly created Public Health Department to develop a curriculum that integrates this opportunity as a mandatory component of the medical internship. Faisal has a history of entrepreneuring health efforts in both clinical and community settings in Pakistan and Kashmir and is an impassioned speaker about health systems reform.

## Lucy Attah Auwalu

Lucy Auwalu trains HIV positive women to provide for their own material, physical, and psychological well-being, and recruits them to care for other women and children living with HIV. Her organization, Women and Children of Hope (WCH), helps women build long-lasting relationships of support. Group members combat discriminatory practices, secure affordable medication, and help each other handle intra-family communication and testing of partners and children. These women's stories are broadcasted over radio and television, showing that women are changing what it means to be HIV positive: they show themselves as women of

strength, dignity, and purpose, not as victims who live in fear and isolation, waiting to die.

To read more about Lucy's work, click [here](#).

### **The Project**

Faisal's project at Women and Children of Hope, entitled "Mobilizing Effort towards Maternal Health Improvement in Nigeria", will aim to reduce the incidence of HIV in communities. Through this project, Lucy and Faisal will work together to build advocacy and awareness for HIV and TB prevention, prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, family planning, and prevention of other infections. Faisal will also be working on developing key curricula for youth, traditional birth attendants (TBAs), community health extension workers and volunteers to raise awareness around sexual and reproductive health issues. During his time at Women and Children of Hope, he will be encouraged to develop and build upon the model as it relates to maternal health.