NIC PESHAWAR

NEWSLETTER

MARCH / APRIL 2025

NIC PESHAWAR

MARCH / APRIL 2025

NEWSLETTER

Content:

Introduction	2
Cohort 13 Applications Close, Interviews Begin	2
Resolution Day	2
Intl Women's day + Female Startups Showcase	3
Startup Spotlight	4
Cohort 13 Pitching Day and Final Selection	5
Cohort 13 Orientation Day: The Journey Begins	6
Highlight of the Month: InvestLab and KPIS	7
Workshops and Curriculum Sessions	9
Partnerships, Outreach, and Impact	11

Introduction

March 2025 arrived with a spirit of renewal—and with it came the holy month of Ramadan. As the season of reflection, compassion, and community began, so did a fresh chapter at NIC Peshawar. From new sessions for our onboarded cohort to community moments that brought our startups closer, the energy this month was both purposeful and deeply connected to the values of resilience and gratitude.







Cohort 13: Applications Closed, Interviews in Full Swing

With applications for Cohort 13 now closed, the focus shifted to what matters most—identifying founders with the drive to solve real problems. Our interview panels met a wave of determined entrepreneurs, each bringing sharp ideas and sector insights to the table. From scalable tech to grassroots innovation, the interviews marked the start of a rigorous selection process—and the beginning of promising new journeys.



Resolution Day: What's Your Why?

Pakistan was built on a resolution—and every day, at NIC Peshawar, we see that spirit come alive in the founders, innovators, and changemakers shaping what's next.

On 23rd March, we turned the spotlight on our community and asked a simple yet powerful question: What's your resolution?

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY:

Spotlighting the Women Who Power Our Ecosystem

At NIC Peshawar, supporting women-led innovation isn't a campaign—it's a commitment woven into our foundation. This International Women's Day, we reaffirmed that commitment by celebrating the changemakers who continue to push boundaries, drive impact, and build ventures that matter.



Mashaal Jawad – STEMverse
A fierce advocate for tech education, Mashaal is on a mission to close the STEM gap by creating interactive, accessible learning experiences for students across Pakistan. Her startup is equipping the next generation with the tools to dream—and build—big.

Dur-e-Nayab – Phulwarii
With a deep-rooted love for culture and craft, Dur-e-Nayab's Phulwarii is a jewelry brand that blends handcrafted tradition with a modern twist. In a recent collaboration with Pixel Craft Studios, their pieces were digitized and displayed on AI-generated models in futuristic, virtual sets—proving that craftsmanship can thrive in a tech-forward world.





Zahra Kamal Khan – Noyyaa
Zahra's startup, Noyyaa, isn't just a lifestyle brand—it's a quiet revolution against disposable design. Founded by visionary women entrepreneurs, Noyyaa creates elegant, plastic-free products from waste and discarded materials. From trays and clocks to candles and keychains, each piece is designed to be aesthetic, durable, and environmentally responsible.

STARTUP SPOTLIGHT

FlareiD Shines at DFDI Islamabad 2025

From a promising idea to a standout presence on a national stage—FlareiD, one of NIC Peshawar's rising startups, made waves at Design for Digital Innovation (DFDI) Islamabad 2025. Representing KP's entrepreneurial spirit, FlareiD showcased its innovative identity verification and digital onboarding solutions to a diverse audience of tech leaders, investors, and policymakers, and earned recognition not just for its cutting-edge product, but for its clear vision of enabling secure, scalable digital trust in Pakistan's growing fintech and services sectors.



Creativity Meets Community with Cloo x Toteally Awesome

Two of our creative ventures, Cloo and Toteally Awesome, teamed up for a collaborative workshop that brought color, craft, and community together under one roof.

Founders, team members, and guests personalized their very own tote bags and crafted unique pottery pieces. For seasoned artists and newbies alike, the session offered a chance to unplug, get hands-on, and tap into a different kind of creativity. Beyond the fun, this workshop celebrated the entrepreneurial spirit that thrives on collaboration and culture. It was a reminder that innovation isn't always digital—sometimes, it's painted, molded, and carried home with pride.





PITCHING DAY:
Where Ideas Met Opportunity

April 9th brought the final stage of our Cohort 13 selection—a high-energy Pitching Day that put shortlisted startups to the ultimate test. With judges joining us from across Peshawar and beyond, the day was packed with sharp questions, bold ideas, and real-time decision-making. The room pulsed with competitive spirit as founders pitched their visions, refined their narratives, and demonstrated their potential to scale.

After a rigorous evaluation, the most promising ventures were selected to join NIC Peshawar's 13th Cohort—ready to embark on a journey of growth, learning, and impact.



ORIENTATION DAY:
Kicking Off the Cohort 13 Journey

April 24th marked the official beginning of Cohort 13's incubation journey at NIC Peshawar. The day opened with a warm welcome from our Director, Asim Ishaq Khan, who set the tone with a powerful message on vision, resilience, and the road ahead. Peshawar's reputed entrepreneur Taimur Riaz Khan, founder of House of TRK and our alumnus Ezaz Ahmad Khan, founder of Altimate Outdoors, joined as guest speakers in a fireside chat—sharing hard-earned lessons, honest reflections, and words of encouragement that struck a chord with the new batch.

But this wasn't just about introductions—it was about connection. Founders got to know each other through creative activities like Draw My Story and the fast-paced Startup Bingo Scavenger Hunt, designed to spark collaboration from day one. The energy was contagious, and the message was clear: your startup journey starts here, but you won't walk it alone.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

April came to a climax at NIC Peshawar with two game-changing initiatives that marked a turning point for KP's entrepreneurial ecosystem: the **InvestLab workshop** and the **KP Investor Summit (KPIS) Spring 2025**





INVESTLAB:
Unlocking the Mindset of Angel Investing

Hosted in collaboration with Invest2Innovate (i2i), InvestLab was designed to equip aspiring angel investors, ecosystem builders, and industry professionals with the tools to evaluate and support early-stage startups. Held over three dynamic days, the workshop welcomed 22 participants from diverse professional backgrounds—from seasoned executives to new entrants curious about startup investing.

Led by **Maria Carolina Romero**, a global expert in early-stage investing, the sessions covered a range of essential topics, including the fundamentals of startup evaluation, deal structuring and negotiation, due diligence, and legal frameworks. **Mubariz Siddiqui**, a leading startup lawyer and founder of Carbon Law, provided critical insight into the legal intricacies of early-stage investing—equipping participants with the knowledge to navigate term sheets, shareholder agreements, and regulatory compliance.

But what made InvestLab truly transformational was its outcome:
KP's first-ever Business Angel Network and an Angel Syndicate were announced. The Angel Syndicate, introduced by Illum Khan, COO of Evamp & Saanga, represents a leap forward in building a collaborative, local investment mechanism—allowing investors to pool resources, share deal flow, and collectively back high-potential startups. Meanwhile, the Business Angel Network will create a formal community of investors who will convene regularly to vet deals, share insights, and support startups beyond capital.

NIC PESHAWAR

MARCH / APRIL 2025



KP INVESTOR SUMMIT SPRING 2025:

All Eyes on the North

On the final day, momentum carried into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Investor Summit (KPIS) Spring '25—a flagship event hosted at NIC Peshawar, spotlighting the region's most investment-ready startups.

The summit featured live pitches by our standout startups including Hustle, Robust, STEMverse, Zypherev, Digital Locker and Clouditecture.

Each team pitched to a panel of local and national investors, including representatives from Accelerate Prosperity, Orbit Startups, LMKT, and others. The event drew stakeholders from across the ecosystem—corporate leaders, public sector officials, accelerators, and funders—making it one of the most well-attended and high-impact investor summits in the region.

Additionally, Cohort 12 startups showcased their products in style with pop-up stores—giving the public a firsthand look at their innovative solutions. From cutting-edge tech to handcrafted goods, these startups were not only pitching to investors but also engaging directly with the community.

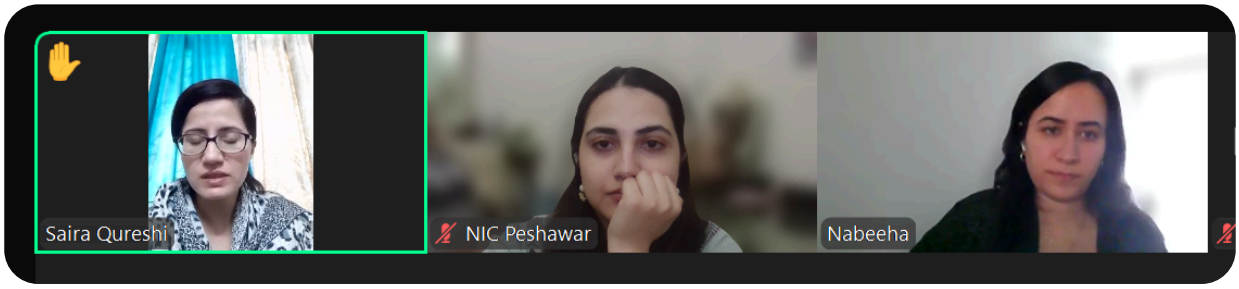


WORKSHOPS & CURRICULUM:
Building Founders from the Inside Out

At NIC Peshawar, we know startups don't just need capital—they need capacity. This past month, our curriculum focused on strengthening the core skills that fuel sustainable growth: leadership, financial literacy, brand identity, and personal development. Here's a glimpse into the sessions that sparked new thinking across Cohort 13:



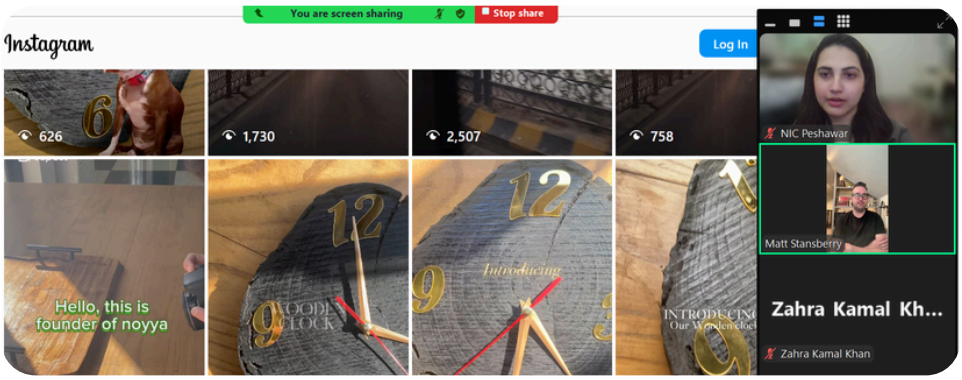
Personality Development and Leadership with Rohma Labeeb and Ali Ibrahim
In this interactive session, founders explored how self-awareness and emotional intelligence influence leadership effectiveness. Rohma Labeeb and Ali Ibrahim led participants through reflective exercises and practical tools to build stronger team dynamics, decision-making skills, and founder resilience. The session emphasized that leadership begins with leading oneself.



Women Leadership with Nabeeha Qazi
This focused session unpacked the unique challenges and strengths women bring to leadership in the startup world. Nabeeha Qazi guided a thought-provoking discussion on overcoming biases, building influence, and embracing authenticity. Female founders left with renewed confidence—and male allies gained valuable insights on inclusive leadership.

Mastering Startup Finances & Navigating Business Growth with Nabeeha Qazi
Numbers don't lie—but they do need decoding. In this finance-focused workshop, Nabeeha Qazi helped founders understand the financial levers of their businesses, from unit economics to growth-stage capital planning. The session gave founders the tools to make smarter, data-driven decisions while keeping their business vision in sharp focus.

WORKSHOPS & CURRICULUM:
Building Founders from the Inside Out



Building Brands That Resonate with Matt Stansberry
What does it take to build a brand people love? In this high-impact branding session, Matt Stansberry shared frameworks and stories on how startups can create emotionally resonant brands that cut through the noise. Founders walked away with clarity on storytelling, brand voice, and customer connection—elements that turn products into movements.



The Art of Pitching with Naqi Ejaz and Mavara Ahmad
Every great startup needs a great story—and the ability to deliver it with impact. In this practical session, Naqi Ejaz and Mavara Ahmad broke down the key elements of a compelling pitch: clarity, confidence, and connection. From structuring the narrative to handling tough questions, founders learned how to tailor their message for investors, customers, and stakeholders alike. The session was packed with real-time feedback, pitch practice, and insider tips to help Cohort 12 own the room every time they step up to pitch.

ECOSYSTEM IN ACTION:
PARTNERSHIPS, OUTREACH, AND IMPACT



MoU Signing: Empowering Girls with RCWF
In a meaningful step toward inclusive development, NIC Peshawar signed an MoU with the Ran'aa Child Welfare Foundation (RCWF) to support poor and out-of-school girls. Through this partnership, RCWF beneficiaries will visit NIC Peshawar to gain exposure to business environments, learn basic computer and entrepreneurial skills, and interact with real-life founders and small business owners.

Outreach Session: Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Peshawar
NIC Peshawar welcomed members of the Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Peshawar where they toured our space and engaged in conversations about the role of entrepreneurial thinking in driving economic growth and social change. The session introduced women leaders to the programs, resources, and mentorship opportunities available through NIC Peshawar, highlighting pathways for collaboration, capacity building, and startup development.





Spotlight on Invest2Innovate (i2i)
Our ongoing collaboration with Invest2Innovate (i2i) has played a crucial role in strengthening KP's investment landscape. From the co-design of InvestLab to the launch of KP's first Business Angel Network and Angel Syndicate, i2i has been a key partner in helping NIC Peshawar build investor capacity and drive capital into early-stage startups. This partnership blends local insight with global expertise—ensuring that our founders are not just investment-ready, but equipped with the strategic mindset to scale sustainably.