

- Educast runs Pakistan's eDoctor project that re-trains and returns to the health care industry hundreds of Pakistani women doctors who never join the profession or stop practicing
- Now, the Pakistani doctors located in over a dozen countries around the world are providing free online consultation at Educast's Maternal and Child Telecenter in Yemen

KARACHI: Over two hundred patients in the Abyan Governorate of Yemen have visited a pilot telemedicine center in less than one week since its launch by Educast Society, the not-for-profit arm of a Saudi-Pakistan online platform, officials at the company said.

Educast is an online training and education platform that runs Pakistan's eDoctor project, launched in 2019 to re-train and return to the health care industry hundreds of Pakistani women doctors who never joined the profession due to family pressure or stopped practicing once they got married or relocated abroad.

Now, the doctors, located across Pakistan and 15 other countries, including Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Canada, and the UAE, provide free online consultation at Educast's Maternal and Child Telecenter in Yemen.

“Educast ... has established multipurpose telecenters in deeply affected areas of Abyan, Marib and Hadhramaut,” Educast CEO Abdullah Butt told Arab News on Sunday. “The facility, inaugurated on Wednesday, is offering live tele-consultation to women and children through remote Pakistani female doctors using high-tech medical equipment like tele-fetal dopplers, digital stethoscopes, portable ultrasound, live consultation platform, and skin and eye examiners.”



In this undated photo, women and children attend a consultation session at a newly-inaugurated telemedicine center in the Abyan Governorate of Yemen. (Photo courtesy: Educast)

Maryam Abdullah Saleh Ahmed, an operator nurse at the Yemeni facility, said the clinic had seen an “overwhelming response” since the start of operations.

“We have provided consultancy and treatment to over 200 patients within a week,” Ahmed said.

The telemedicine clinic in Yemen is linked with a high-tech backup center in Karachi where a go-between, fluent in Arabic and English, coordinates between patients who visit the Yemeni facility and doctors residing in different countries.

Ghulam Mustafa Tabbasum, the Aden-based head of Yemen operations, told Arab News the facility was also focused on mental health, for which a Pakistani doctor living in Canada had been engaged.

According to the World Health Organization, one in five people living in conflict zones have mental health conditions, ranging from stress, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder to psychosis..

“We will be providing information sessions about post exposure stress syndromes, which would be in the native language for better understanding and greater outcomes,” said Dr. Tayyiba Khan, a mental health specialist based in Calgary. “These information sessions will allow the participants to express their concerns and get answers to their questions as they need to be heard. We will explain the normal responses to war zone stress, psychiatric symptoms, and practical coping strategies.”

Midwives are also being trained at the Yemen facility and online teaching offered to local female health workers.

Doctors associated with the program said helping the people of Yemen in this difficult time was an ‘honorable thing.’

“Serving poor women in Yemen and providing them and their children health care services is a major achievement,” said Dr. Rehana Din Muhammad, who is based in Muscat, Oman.

“Serving the people of Yemen in their difficult times, when they are passing through a crisis, is an honorable thing to do,” said Dr. Saima Shamim Ahmed, who is based in Dubai. “I feel excited and elated.”

“The war-torn country and its people need our help,” Saudi-based Dr. Mishaal Tanvir said. “I am honored to extend my services.”