Leadership skills are critical to the organization and effectiveness of businesses, associations, and governments. However personal leadership skills, while discussed less often, are equally important. And USAID Promote's Women's Leadership Development program is working on developing both, through its Jawana Women's Leadership Development courses - with the effects already being felt by participants.

Masooma Baqiri is a first year student of Economic Management at Gawharshad University, where she has been participating in the Jawana classes for four weeks. Masooma learned about the Jawana courses from the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and decided that the mix of leadership and management skills she would take away from the classes would be beneficial to her field of study.

"I can feel the changes it has brought to my daily interactions with people around me. Before I used to be so impatient and felt kind of angry all the time, but now I am learning how to manage and lead, and this is helping me to accomplish my tasks with a more positive attitude," Masooma explained.

The changes Masooma is describing are a result of increased personal leadership - that is, the ability to direct her own life and to lead herself in the direction that she would like for her life to take. And Masooma is already reaping the benefits of the Jawana curriculum after a short time - by figuring out what success means to her, articulating her goals, and learning what she wants out of her future.

She hopes that the Jawana training and her background in economic management will enable her to start an NGO in the future that would focus on helping other women. She feels that she can use her educational knowledge and newly developed leadership and management skills to teach women how to do everything from basic studies to becoming breadwinners in their families. She also hopes that her NGO will be able to inspire women, much in the same way she feels inspired by Jawana. “Women have the potential to compete at any stage of life, but sometimes you need someone polish your skills and show you the spark of your talent.”