



Huq, left, in South Africa interviewing a local fruit seller (in green) with the help of a Zulu translator in January 2001.



VITALS

Hometown
Wall, NJ
Future goal
Founding an English as a second language publishing house
Favorite workout
Kathak, a classical North Indian dance

start her up

Farhana Huq, 31

Why we admire her As Huq sinks her teeth into a salsa-covered burrito, she watches customers line up at the popular San Francisco restaurant La India Bonita. She's thrilled to see that the place is hopping. It probably wouldn't be here without her: Mexican-born Guadalupe Chavez opened the eatery last June with help from a nonprofit group Huq founded in 2003. Called C.E.O. Women (Creating Economic Opportunities for Women), it teaches low-income immigrant women to become savvy entrepreneurs.

How she got started As a kid, Huq watched her divorced Pakistani aunt open a beauty salon in her home to support three kids. "She went from being completely dependent on others to standing strong on her own," she says. After college, Huq joined a local branch of AmeriCorps Vista to work on a program that helps low-income women start small companies. When it ran out of money after 18 months, Huq reached out to the community for help. Two years later, after applying for grants and asking philanthropists for money, Huq had a \$55,000 budget and a plan to continue what AmeriCorps Vista had started.

What she's accomplished In 4 years, Huq has helped more than 450 women start or expand businesses ranging from catering to online retail. Her project has grown from her bedroom to a 1,700-square-foot office with four full-time staffers and two volunteers. For less than \$175, participants enter a 16-week program that coaches them in marketing, legal issues, negotiation, finance, public speaking, and networking while honing their English.

What's next Huq is producing educational soap operas for immigrant entrepreneurs.

»» For more on Huq, visit ceowomen.org.

WVW H Womenshealthmag.com/actionfigures Tell us about someone you know who's making a difference.

TWO SMALL STEPS TOWARD UTOPIA

1 Mind Your Bizness
Budding entrepreneur? Apply for a loan (up to \$10,000) through Count Me In, an online nonprofit microlender for women. Or share your industry tips with new female entrepreneurs, whether you're a business owner or not. For more, visit countmein.org.

2 Well Suited
Host a suit drive at work on behalf of Dress for Success, an international nonprofit that helps cash-poor women look professional. Find a local branch at dressforsuccess.org and ask for instructions on how to get started.

ACT NOW!

