



PSDF Newsletter

Vol 1 - 2015

Impact of Skills for Job 2012

Launch of Skills for Biogas Plants-an Initiative to
Mitigate the Energy Crisis

14,000 Individuals to be Trained according to Industry's
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Message from the Chairman

Skills training is a core element of Government of Punjab's inclusive growth strategy that emphasizes the revival of manufacturing and productivity enhancing economic growth to generate sustained employment. In support of this strategy, PSDF has emerged as an important player for financing demand-driven skills in key sectors of Punjab's economy.

Rigorous research, guidance by potential employees of the trainees, engagement of quality training providers and regular monitoring of the delivery of training programs are the hallmark of PSDF operations. This ensures that trainees acquire quality skills and thus improve their prospects for productive employment and contribution to economic growth.

After successfully piloting operations in four poorest districts in Punjab, PSDF funded training was extended to another ten districts in 2013. By March 2015, PSDF had funded training of 82,000 individuals. I am pleased to report that 40% of the trainees are females. Furthermore, contributing to Punjab's target of training two million workers over the next four years, PSDF has launched specialized schemes for women to enable them to play an important role in Punjab's future economic growth. The current phase of the project ends in December 2015.

In the next phase, PSDF will launch, in collaboration with the Center for Economic Research Pakistan (CERP), new projects aimed at increasing crop and livestock productivity in order to improve livelihood in rural areas. In South Punjab, a scheme titled "Big Push in the Rural Economy (BPRES)" is in the planning stage and has exciting prospects. It aims to harness the energy of the private corporate sector to develop innovative training modules for farm workers to increase crop and livestock yields and thus move towards a more knowledge intensive farm sector.

It gives the PSDF Board immense pleasure that in the next financial year, the Fund will expand its operations to cover all of Punjab. To that end, UK's Department for International Development (DFID) will continue to support PSDF generously increasing its financial assistance to £63 million spread over the next six years. In addition, the World Bank will provide \$32 million over the next five years to further strengthen PSDF operations. These funds will greatly enhance Government of Punjab's budgetary allocation to PSDF.

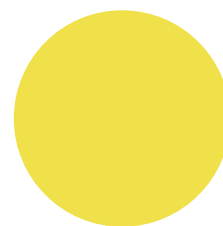
On behalf of the PSDF Board, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Punjab, DFID and the World Bank for their confidence in PSDF and for their generous support. I would also extend my thanks to PSDF staff for the excellent work they are doing in supporting Government of Punjab's laudable objective of promoting inclusive economic growth.

Company Overview

PSDF is a not-for-profit company setup by Punjab Government with the support of UK's Department for International Development. It is a GBP £50 million training fund setup by equal contribution of GBP £25 million by each government. PSDF's vision is to improve income generation opportunities for the poor and vulnerable population of selected districts of Punjab through the promotion of a competitive skills training market. The Fund is currently operating in fourteen districts of Punjab: Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, Chiniot, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Khanewal, Lahore, Narowal, Rahim Yar Khan, Sargodha, Sheikhpura and Vehari.

PSDF is a corporate body established under Section 42 of the Companies Ordinance. The board is comprised of business champions, civil society leaders and acclaimed academicians. Four provincial secretaries are represented to ensure ownership and support by the public sector and create synergies with existing initiatives and policies.

Board of Directors



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Mr. Ali Sarfraz

Chief Executive Officer

Punjab Skills Development Fund



Skills for Biogas Plants

Agriculture contributes substantially to the provincial economy, accounting for more than 21% of its GDP. The sector is employing 47% of the provincial workforce and is the main source of livelihood for rural communities. Pervasive energy crisis which disabled the industrial sector has also affected the relative competitiveness of the agricultural activities in the country. Combating the energy shortage is one of the most preferential agendas of the Government of the Punjab. In this regard, Agriculture Department, Government of Punjab planned to employ alternate energy sources to mitigate the energy scarcity in the rural terrains for agrarian activities. Under the initiative, Biogas Plants are being installed to operate 100,000 tubewells across Punjab.

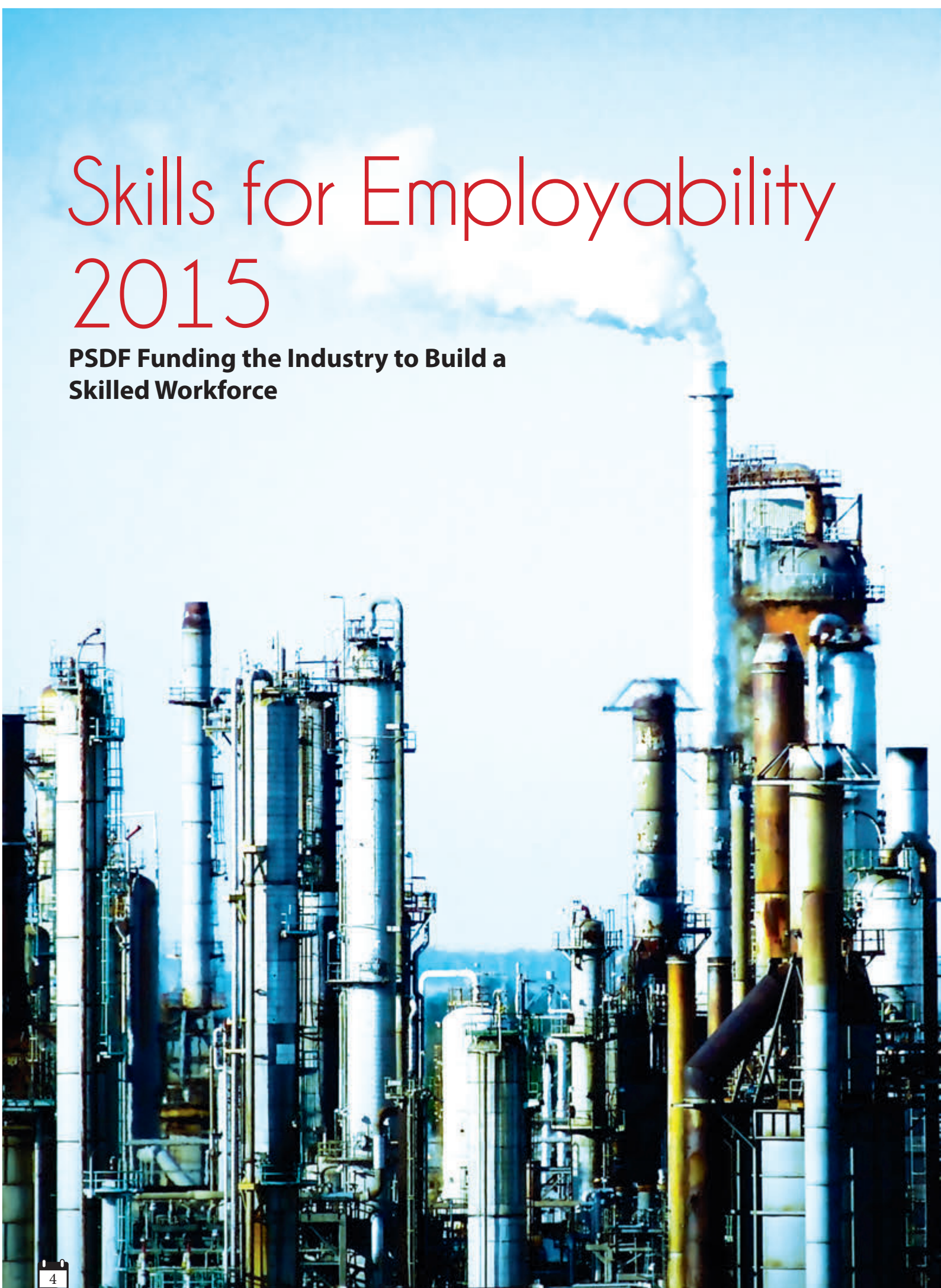
Attributing to its reputation of quality vocational skills development and to train relevant skill base for the installation and maintenance of Biogas plants, PSDF was engaged by the Agriculture Department to fund the trainings of Biogas Plant Supervisors and Plant Technicians. In order to effectuate the engagement with Agriculture Department, PSDF launched Skills for Biogas Scheme. The Fund awarded contracts of PKR 16.8 million to 5 Training Service Providers. Under the scheme 3500 individuals from the 14 target districts of Punjab - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Faisalabad, Chiniot, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Rahim Yar Khan, Narowal, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, Vehari and Khanewal will be trained as Biogas Plant Supervisors and Plant Technicians.

Apart from the technical trainings, the selected Training Service Providers will also be capacitating the trainees in terms of enabling their effective market linkages. The scheme has the objective of promoting standardized and structured trainings of biogas plant supervisors and technicians. It will contribute towards reduced deployment of conventional energy sources and would improve the living standards in the rural settings. At present, 0.835 million tubewells are being operated on high speed diesel; 70% of these tubewells are owned by small farmers who are comprised of 85% of the farmers' population. It has been estimated that each tubewell (16HP) that will be operated on biogas will save more than 2000 liters of high speed diesel annually which would cause each small farmer to save up to 2 lakh per year.

PSDF has scrupulously structured curriculum for the courses with the coordination of GIZ Pakistan, TEVTA and University of Agriculture Faisalabad. The Fund has also engaged curricula development experts from Nepal for the development of a more viable and pragmatic syllabi meeting the international standards. A Training of the Trainers session was also arranged to fine tune the skills of the trainers.

Skills for Employability 2015

**PSDF Funding the Industry to Build a
Skilled Workforce**





Trained workforce is integral to the industrial development of a country, which further brings about the economic growth and expansion. Labor force that does not fulfill the industry's skills requirements greatly hinders the achievement of production efficiencies and quality. In order to develop relevant skilled workforce, industry should play an essential role in devising the skill needs and for the provision of the trainings.

Since its inception in 2011, PSDF has funded more than 86,000 individuals from the fourteen districts of Punjab. PSDF has a target of training 135,000 individuals by December 2015. In order to enhance the efficacy of its trainings and to fund the industry need-based trainings, PSDF is going to launch another large-scale training scheme, Skills for Employability 2015. Under the scheme, approximately 14,000 individuals will be trained in various trades that will be higher in demand by the local industry. The scheme will be implemented in 14 target districts of Punjab; Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Rahim Yar Khan, Khanewal, Lodhran & Vehari, Muzaffargarh, Chiniot, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Narowal, Lahore, Sheikhupura and Sargodha.

PSDF has organized an awareness seminar to apprise the local industry about PSDF as the funding opportunity. Various industrial units, keeping the capacity to become PSDF-funded Training Service Providers, can train manpower according to their skill needs and can employ them accordingly. PSDF is currently funding more than 159 public/private sector and not-for-profit organizations.

14,000
individuals to
be trained



Skills for Job 2014-15

Determined to effectuate its efforts to promote need-based vocational skills development, Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) launched third round of one of its largest training schemes, Skills for Job 2014-15 in November 2014. At a launching ceremony, contracts of PKR 1.7 Billion were awarded to 44 Training Service Providers. The Fund engaged a multitude of training institutes from public, private and non-profit sectors to deliver the trainings in 118 multiple trades. Under the scheme, Skills for Job 2014-15, more than 24,000 individuals will be trained from 7 districts of Punjab- Lahore, Sheikhpura, Faisalabad, Chiniot, Sargodha, Gujranwala, and Narowal.

PSDF has trained more than 86,000 individuals under its various schemes. Through the provision of quality trainings in multiple employable trades, this scheme, Skills for Job 2014-15 would further contribute to prepare need-based workforce which would add on to create a labor abundant Pakistan. Under this scheme trainings are being offered in various innovative trades from construction, hospitality, information technology, automobiles, mechanical, textiles and service sectors. These formally accredited training courses will capacitate the individuals belonging to lower income backgrounds to get employed in the labor market on improved wages.

In the preceding rounds of Skills for Job, more than 37,000 individuals have been trained from the fourteen target districts of Punjab. Under the scheme's ongoing round, Skills for Job 2014-15, more than 2000 individuals have completed their trainings and more than 8000 are currently enrolled.

Skills for Job 2015

After successfully launching the preceding rounds of Skills for Job, in January 2015, PSDF launched another round, Skills for Job 2015 under which 11,000 individuals will be trained in various employment-oriented trades. Contracts of worth eight hundred million were awarded to fifty two Training Service Providers in a launching ceremony at a local hotel. The scheme would target individuals belonging to the districts of Khanewal, Vehari, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh and Rahim Yar Khan, in order to equip them with various need-based skills. Under Skills for Job 2015, 5177 individuals are attending training classes in numerous demand-driven trades.

To implement the schemes, PSDF is funding trainers' remuneration, training manuals and consumables, management and reporting cost, rental/maintenance of machinery and equipment, utilities and miscellaneous items. PSDF also provides trainee support that is inclusive of fixed stipend of Rs.1500/-per month and Rs.3000/- per month in case the training is being provided outside the 7 target districts of Punjab.

SKILLS FOR JOB



35,000

individuals to
be trained

NEED BASED VOCATIONAL TRAININGS



domestic tailors; out of this pool of trainees 10 women were engaged to design and stitch pretty and practical attires instilled with the richness of Ralli, Vegetable dyes, Chunri and Traditional embroidery. The southern appeal of perky colors was infused in the elegance of kurtas, shalwar kameez, drapes and accessories. The event was thronged with fashionistas, social luminaries and celebrities, who joined in to appreciate the effortless pastoral fusion in contemporary designs. The event was a whole success and was colossally covered by the local media. Fashion exhibition was funded by Citi Foundation where Karvaan Crafts Foundation was the implementation partner.

The sprint of southern Punjab hit the fashion trunk of Lahore when a dazzling fashion exhibition was organized by PSDF at Fashion Pakistan Lounge on April 4, 2015 to showcase the attires sewed by the rustic hands of women from Khairpur Tamiwali, district Bahawalpur. Back in 2012 PSDF arranged the training of more than 100 women as

Southern Appeal Rousing the Vogue



NEWS & EVENTS

PUNJAB INDUSTRIAL EXPO 2015



Participation in Punjab Industrial Expo 2015

In order to reach out the local industry for the implementation of its upcoming schemes and to apprise about the pool of skilled manpower trained under various schemes of the Fund, PSDF took part in Punjab Industrial Expo 2015. The stall was thronged with people to take information about various initiatives of the Fund, specifically Skills for Employability 2015, for which the Fund is keen to provide funding to the local industry to act as vocational Training Service Providers. Through this initiative, the industry would be able to train people according to its skills needs which would ensure the post training employment for the trainees. The event proved to be hugely fruitful to catalyze the Fund's efforts to connect the trained individuals of PSDF with the actual industry out there.

PSDF Joined Hands with Akhuwat

On September 22, 2014, PSDF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Akhuwat to facilitate its trainees with the access to micro-loan opportunities. The MoU signing ceremony was held at PSDF's Head office in Lahore where Mr. Ali Sarfraz, CEO PSDF, and Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Executive Director Akhuwat, inked the agreement between the organizations and shared their gratitude towards this collaboration. Since the start of its operations, PSDF has funded more than 86,000 individuals from vulnerable communities of 14 districts of Punjab. The primary purpose to team up with Akhuwat is to provide the eligible trainees with appropriate assistance in attaining micro-loans to set-up their own businesses.



PSDF Organized Training of the Trainers (ToT) to Implement its Skills for Biogas Scheme

PSDF arranged a five-day Training of the Trainers (ToT) session in collaboration with GIZ Pakistan at a local hotel in Lahore in the month of January, 2015. The ToT was aimed at providing the necessary skills to the trainers for the implementation of the Fund's 'Skills for Biogas Scheme'. After the completion of training session, the trained trainers would train 3500 individuals from fourteen districts of Punjab as Biogas Plant Technicians and Biogas Plant Supervisors. The master trainer was engaged from Nepal whereas thorough assistance was provided by GIZ Pakistan for curricula development in order to ensure the efficacy of the training scheme.



PSDF Joins Hands with ITU (Information Technology University)

In the wakefulness of capacitating PSDF funded trainees with the relevant information about the job market, the Fund collaborated with ITU (Information Technology University), Lahore. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between PSDF and ITU on February 11, 2015. Under the MoU, ITU will assist in disseminating relevant job information to PSDF-funded trainees through its Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) project. PSDF's trainees will be able to interact with IVR and can search available job openings.



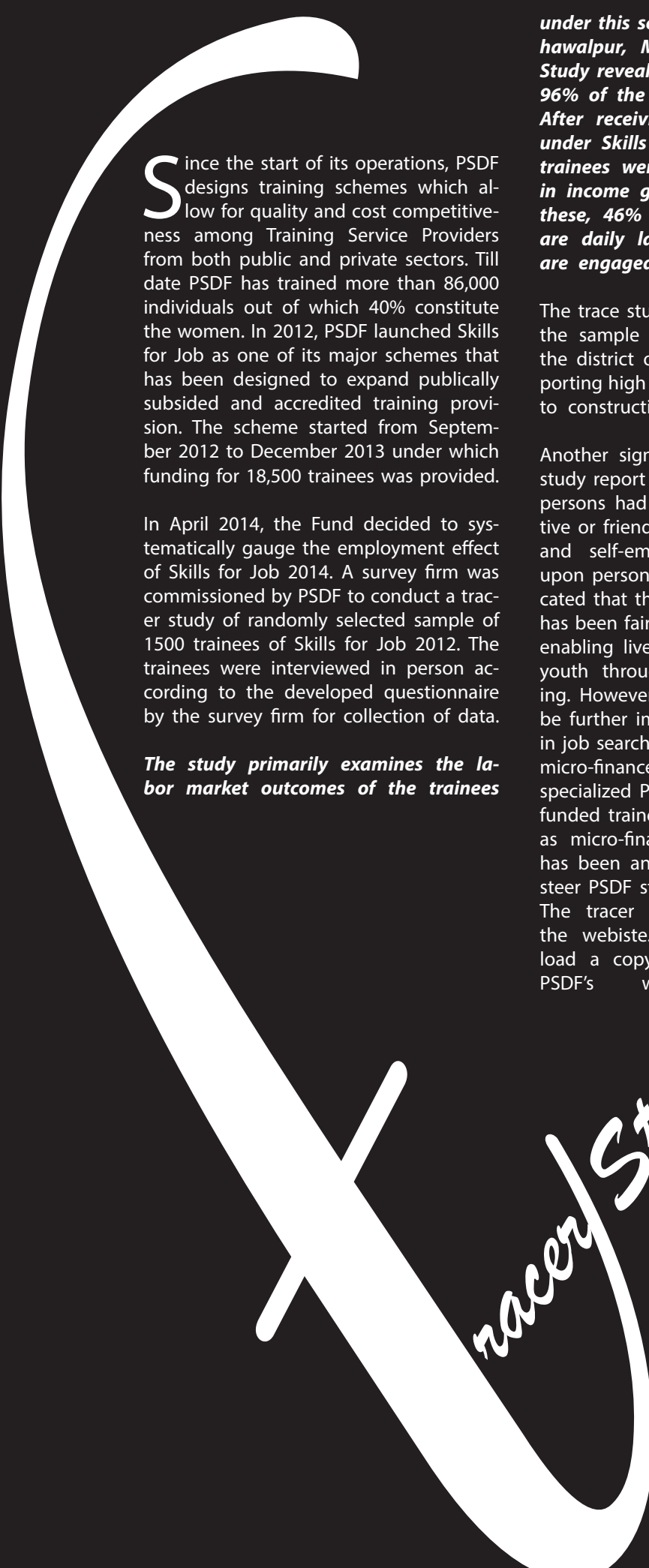
Contract Signing with Habib Bank Limited

On February 18, 2015 PSDF signed a contract with Habib Bank Limited for the disbursement of its trainees' stipend. Contract signing ceremony was held at the HBL Regional Head Office in Lahore. On behalf of PSDF, Mr Ali Sarfraz, CEO PSDF inked the contract with Mr. Faiq Sadiq, Group Head Payment Services, HBL.

Capacitating the Industry as Training Service Providers

In order to effectuate its objective of need-based skills development in its upcoming scheme 'Skills for Employability 2015', PSDF organized an awareness seminar for the industry on December 20, 2015 at Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industries. Representatives of the local industry were invited to apprise them about PSDF as a funding opportunity to provide industry demand-driven vocational trainings. The seminar was also aimed to acquaint the industry with the databank of manpower that has been trained in accordance with the industry's skills needs with the funding of PSDF. Training Service Providers (TSPs) from public, private and non-for-profit sector were also invited at the seminar.





Since the start of its operations, PSDF designs training schemes which allow for quality and cost competitiveness among Training Service Providers from both public and private sectors. Till date PSDF has trained more than 86,000 individuals out of which 40% constitute the women. In 2012, PSDF launched Skills for Job as one of its major schemes that has been designed to expand publically subsidized and accredited training provision. The scheme started from September 2012 to December 2013 under which funding for 18,500 trainees was provided.

In April 2014, the Fund decided to systematically gauge the employment effect of Skills for Job 2014. A survey firm was commissioned by PSDF to conduct a tracer study of randomly selected sample of 1500 trainees of Skills for Job 2012. The trainees were interviewed in person according to the developed questionnaire by the survey firm for collection of data.

The study primarily examines the labor market outcomes of the trainees

under this scheme in the districts of Bahawalpur, Muzaffargarh and Lodhran. Study reveals that prior to the trainings 96% of the trainees were unemployed. After receiving PSDF funded trainings under Skills for Job 2012, 67% of the trainees were reported to be involved in income generation activities. Out of these, 46% are wage employees, 10% are daily laborers and the remaining are engaged in family or self-business.

The trace study also divulges that 65% of the sample trainees are working within the district of their residence. Trades, reporting high employment rates are related to construction, commerce and services.

Another significant finding of the tracer study report is that 81% of the employed persons had found work through a relative or friend. Hence, both job placement and self-employment were dependent upon personal networks. The survey indicated that the scheme Skills for Job 2012 has been fairly able to contribute towards enabling livelihood opportunities for the youth through quality vocational training. However, labor market outcome can be further improved by assisting trainees in job search and enabling their access to micro-finance facilities. PSDF has setup a specialized Placement Unit to connect its funded trainees with the industry as well as micro-finance institutions. The Study has been an inordinate guide to further steer PSDF strategic goals and objectives. The tracer study is also available on the website. For details please download a copy of the tracer study from PSDF's website www.psdf.org.pk.

Tracer Study

PSDF Placement Unit

Since the start of its operations, PSDF is successfully enabling quality vocational training opportunities for the individuals belonging to its target districts of the Punjab. Till date, PSDF has funded training of more than 86,000 individuals and is pursuing to launch further training schemes.

As a substantial strategic step, PSDF established a placement unit in 2013 in order to enable job opportunities for the individuals trained under the Fund's various schemes and to aid the industry at large with the provision of relevant trained manpower. Striving to enhance the industry's engagement for the placement of PSDF-funded trainees, the Placement Unit has taken on board more than 135 local and multinational potential employers.

The registered employers are exclusively provided with an access to the large-scale database of PSDF-funded trained individuals who are skilled in more than 200 diversified trades. Through the access to the databank of PSDF-funded trained manpower, the employers can contact and hire skilled individuals according to their specific requirements. To further bridge the gap between the industry and the

skilled workforce, PSDF's Placement Unit put up its stalls at the career fairs which were held at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and Lahore School of Economics.

Apart from enabling job opportunities for the trainees, the Placement Unit is keeping a close liaison with Akhuwat in order to provide required information to the trainees for their access to micro-loans for setting up a business. In addition to their other efforts, the Placement Unit's team facilitated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Information Technology University (ITU).

Under the MoU, the ITU will disseminate information about relevant jobs to PSDF-funded trainees via Interactive Voice Response (IVR) services. Through this unique service, PSDF-funded trainees will be able to interact with the IVR and search for relevant job openings. The team is rigorously trying to connect with more employers, micro-finance organizations and other relevant organizations to enable further job opportunities for PSDF-funded trainees and to aid in catalyzing the industrial growth with the supply of trained manpower.



STRIVING TO PLACE PSDF FUNDED TRAINEES!

Skill Needs Assessment for Meat & Dairy Processing Sectors

In line with its objectives, PSDF conducts sector-specific studies to identify and investigate skills needs to allow for comprehensive understanding and strategic planning. Accordingly, the focus of this study is on the two sectors of the food processing industry: meat processing and dairy processing. The purpose of this study was to focus on skills needs of the meat and dairy processing chains starting at the mid-farm level.

A mixed data collection strategy was deployed to uncover quantitative and qualitative insights and findings in regard to meat and dairy processing. There were 125 meat processing units covered in the survey: 42 were registered/formal units while 83 were unregistered/ informal units. For dairy processing, 128 units were covered: 42 were registered/formal units while 86 were unregistered/ informal units. As part of this exercise, a total of 36 expert interviews took place including both meat and dairy sectors. The third component of the primary research included in-depth interview sessions with training service providers: twenty-three (23) TSP interviews took place.

Dairy processing is a major economic sector in Pakistan: the Pakistan Dairy Association estimates that approximately 47-50 billion liters of milk is extracted annually. Combined with the livestock sector, this adds around 11-12% to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). Dairy processing is mainly oriented towards milk extraction and distribution. Milk processing takes place towards basic products such as butter, yoghurt, creams, khoya and ice cream. Conventional methods and practices are prevalent across Punjab and other provinces. However, modernization began to take place as a result of larger corporations – such as Nestle, Engro, and Haleeb, which set up large-scale modern processing units in various parts of the country and restructured the formal sector. Technological advancement in Pakistan at large is still in its infancy. Conventional methods are deep-rooted in the country's history and breakaway from these practices has been difficult because of traditions, economic constraints and lower awareness levels.

Findings from the survey in milk sector revealed that informal units, which are more common across the province, are of small (up to 5 workers) to medium size (between 6 and 20 workers). On the other hand, formal units employed more personnel and were observed to be medium to large in size. Formal units were also relatively new, with 76% of them being operational for less than 10 years as compared to 40% informal units. Dairy processing was divided into 3 key components: 1) on-farm milking; 2) milk collection/post-farm storage; and 3) dairy product-making. 31 of the 42 formal units were mainly involved in dairy farming; 4 declared milk collection as their

primary activity; 14 stated that dairy processing was their core function. On the other hand, 33 out of 86 (38%) informal units were categorized as dairy farms; 22 (26%) stated milk collection as their primary activity; and around half, 46 units, claimed to be processing units. Around 81% of formal units and 73% of informal units were producing fresh/raw milk. This was followed, to a lower extent, by yogurt and cream.

In meat sector formal processing units were relatively new – where around 75% had been operational for less than 10 years compared to 43% informal units. The meat process was also divided into 3 key components: 1) calf-fattening/animal nutrition; 2) slaughtering/butchery; and 3) meat-cuts/processing. Of the formal units, 16 out of 42 were involved in calf-fattening/animal nutrition. There were 8 conventional slaughterhouses/butcheries while 18 classified their units as modern meat processing units. On the other hand, 27 out of 83 (33%) informal units were involved in calf-fattening/animal nutrition; 45 (54%) were conventional slaughterhouses/butchers and 16 (19%) claimed to be modern meat processing units as a result of some level of technology used in their activities.

In milk sector the three most commonly cited occupations in high demand are presently milkers, milk product makers and machine operators. In meat sector livestock farmers, butchers and machine operators are the three most common occupations currently in high demand. The same occupations were expected to be in high demand in the future, along with doctor of veterinary medicine/veterinary officer and nutritionist. Livestock farmers, butchers and machine operators were the three most common occupations currently in high demand. The same three occupations were expected to be in high demand in the future, along with doctor of veterinary medicine / veterinary officer and nutritionist.

Employment projections are based on insights and perspectives of relevant experts including representatives of associations, large unit owners, sector researchers, and academic professors with expertise in these two subsectors. In the absence of published data or a province-wide baseline, estimates provided below must be treated as broad indications of the current/near future demand (in terms of trained persons needed).

Dairy Processing	Meat Processing
On farm milking (milkers): 7,000	Feedlot farmers/stockmen: 3,000
Milk collection/post farm storage: 3,500	Butchers: 3,000
Dairy product-making: 500	Machine operators: 2,000
Total: 11,000 trained persons	Doctors of veterinary medicine / veterinary officer: 300
	Total: 8,300 trained persons

Around half of the workers in both informal and formal sectors stated that they required more training to improve their performance. Only 38% of employers in the formal units and 48% in the informal units felt that their workers were fully proficient at their jobs. Similar to the dairy processing sector, 36% of employers in the formal units and 43% in informal units felt that 100% of their staff was fully proficient and skilled to undertake the requisite tasks assigned to them in meat sector.

Meat and Dairy Processing Sector Skills Study

Thus, this sector study for meat and dairy processing confirms the considerable growth potential of both these sectors in terms of size and quality. PSDF has correctly identified the meat and dairy processing sectors to focus upon for the purpose of skill development.

Bilqees Bibi is now able to play her role in managing her household expense roll!

A resident of Shahpur Kanjra, Lahore, Bilqees Bibi was spending a meager life with her five kids and her husband. Troubled over her husband's barely sufficient income, she was not able to send her kids to school.

"My husband drives a rented auto richshaw and he has never been able to make enough money to support our family expenses. I wanted to send my kids to school but it seemed impossible. My kids do not have even basic necessities, resulting in many sleepless nights for me. The payment of our monthly loan was further lessening our income," said Bilqees Bibi while talking to PSDF.

Bilqees got to know about PSDF-funded courses under the scheme, Skills for Garments, through one of her neighbors and a very good friend. The neighbor insisted her to pick up spirits and to apply for the course. Bilqees applied for the course of Industrial Stitching Machine Operator and got admission at the training facility of one of PSDF-funded training service provider in Lahore.

"It was really a tough time. At first I was uncertain about getting admission and then going out for the training was a huge challenge because my kids were at home and there was nobody to take care of them. I called for the assistance from one of my sisters and then joined classes. I was really happy and gratified on getting free-of-cost training, course material and monthly stipend. At the end of my training, I was really anxious about doing a job and first of all managing to get one. My trainers at the training center helped me," she said.

PSDF has engaged various industrial units as training service providers, which enhance the job prospects for the trainees as employees in these industrial units after completion of their trainings. Bilqees Bibi was initially hired by the industrial unit where she got the training afterwards she found a very good job at the Angora Textiles Pvt Ltd. She is earning PKR 12,000 per month and is really happy on being able to ease out the confiscated expense roll at her house. She further shared that her husband appreciates her as she is sending her three kids to school.

"I am very thankful to PSDF for providing us the free-of-cost training; it has greatly helped me in improving the life of my family. These days I am urging one of my sisters to get admission in PSDF-funded free training courses, as she has always wanted to be a fashion designer but could not pursue her career due to the sheer lack of funds. I want every deserving woman to attend these courses to be able to free her destiny from absolute poverty," she said.



Saleem is now realizing his dreams as an Electrical Supervisor in a well-known firm!

At an age of 25, Saleem has fully realized his responsibilities towards his family. His father died 20 years ago when Saleem was barely a grown-up. Before the death of his father, they were a well-to-do family, including his two more siblings an elder brother and a sister. After the death of his father, their relatives never gave them their due share from the agricultural land in Hasilpur, a tehsil of Bahawalpur district. To mitigate the crisis his brother started working at a very young age on daily wages and as laborer in agricultural fields.

"We spent an awful childhood with a really truncated income stream. My brother could not continue his schooling. We sent our sister to school for a few years but later on she also had to quit school. My mother wanted me to continue my education. I did my D.A.E electronic from the Government College of Technology, Bahawalpur. After having this diploma, it was again difficult to secure a good job, I was barely earning PKR 7000/- when my friend shared with me a newspaper ad displaying the admission criteria of PSDF-funded courses," he said.

Saleem completed his training of Electrical Supervisor from Descon Training Institute Lahore in 2012. Now, Saleem is employed at Barkat Textiles in Lahore and is taking a monthly salary

of PKR 25000/-. He is sending money back home which has enabled him to ease their financial confiscation. Both brothers also arranged for the wedding of their sister. Saleem is hopeful that he would certainly be able to pay off the loans they took for their sister's wedding as he is expecting a raise in his salary.

"When I decided to take the course of Electrical Supervisor in Lahore, my mother was worried as it was going to curtail my share in our household income. But I convinced her as I told her that it is going to be free-of-cost and I was going to get free accommodation and sufficient monthly stipend. I got my job after one month of the course completion. I would definitely like to urge others, who are currently directionless due to prolonged poverty, to take admission in PSDF-funded courses for various vocational trainings. I would also like to offer my regards to the organization for the help and support. There is no other way but to work hard in order to make a way out of difficulties," he said.



Sohail is set to draw a better future for his family!

Hafiz Mohammad Sohail, a 22-year-old young guy, a resident of Bahawalnagar is currently working at Soft Line Company in Lahore. He completed his training as a Graphics Designer, the training was funded by the Punjab Skills Development Fund in 2014. He earns more than PKR 20,000 per month. Sohail's mother has been working as a domestic tailor since the death of his father. She was working day and night to arrange for the resources for her six children, yet they were always at the disposal of their relative's financial help and assistance.

"I am the eldest of my six siblings. It was heart wrenching for me to see my mother and my sisters work day and night as tailors to make bare money for our survival. My mother wanted me to continue my education, but I gave up after Intermediate. I looked for a job but I could not secure any job prospect except of labor on daily wages. I started working at a local hotel (dhabba) to make some money. One day on my way to my work, I saw this banner publicizing PSDF-funded courses in fashion and graphics design. I applied for the course and got admission. My family especially my mother was really worried on sending me to Lahore as I was the eldest but I ensured her that I would get back with my certificate and would hopefully get a respectable job," he said.

Sohail completed his three months course of Graphics Designer from Step Institute of Arts & Design and then immediately got an internship at an advertising agency in Lahore. Later on he secured a good job, where he started earning reasonable money. He tries hard to send as much money as possible back to his home in Bahawalnagar and is really hopeful that he will step up the ladder of his career as a Graphics Designer," he said while talking to PSDF.

"I am really happy because my mother got a relief after so many years of hardships and hard work. Now, she works for lesser hours as I'm sending her money. I have also urged her to continue my siblings' education. I have asked my sisters to attain basic education and then apply for the PSDF-funded courses under various schemes so that they may be able to earn better for themselves and their families. It was my dream because I wanted to get into this field of design but could never imagine of attending a course with full fee. It was because of free tuition, material and above all monthly stipend and hostel facility provided by PSDF that I was able to get this diploma in design," he said.

Sohail wants to pursue his career in Graphics design and is hopeful that he would get even better job opportunities as now he has the right skills set.

"I am thankful to all the authorities that initiated vocational training schemes for youth in the province. This was indeed a turning point in my life and I would continue my hard work to be able to never lose any opportunity," he said.



Shumaila, another trainee from PSDF-funded vocational course shares her story of aspiration and hard work.

A resident of Muzzafargarh, Shumaila, in a very young age is earning for her family and pursuing her education. She completed the course of Graphics Design, funded by PSDF, and is now working at a reputable advertising firm in Lahore. Shumaila had a knack with colors and design work, but she could never imagine of transforming her passion into her career until she got to hear about PSDF-funded course in Lahore from one of her friends.

"We are two sisters and one brother, my brother is at a trivial position in a governmental job in Shiekhupura. We have been granted a small house where we barely manage our expenses of living. My mother is ill and my sister is working as a domestic tailor, I was also assisting her until I got admission in Graphics Designer course," she said.

After completion of her course in 2014, Shumaila got an internship at a local advertising agency in Lahore, where she started earning PKR 10,000 per month. Shumaila is sending money back home and is also completing her intermediate privately.

"I am doing my job and in the evening I'm studying for my exams. Now I am able to afford my fee and I am also pursuing my education. I am really gratified to PSDF for providing me the right skills to make my living and for proving to be a support for my family. I am also urging my sister to attend the course of Fashion Designing so that she can add further value to her work," she said.



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