

## Dignity in Work: Skill Development of Punjab's Transgender Community

### OVERVIEW

Pakistan's transgender community has remained outside the formal employment sector for decades. Neglect of the social and economic needs of transgender people has resulted in their exclusion from mainstream society. Most transgenders have limited opportunities to work and end up as sex workers, performers or resort to begging to make a living. This neither gives them dignity or financial security and continues the cycle of discrimination and isolation for them.

In 2018, the Supreme Court of Pakistan passed the Transgender Persons Act. The act formally prohibited the discrimination and harassment of trans people and called upon the government to provide protection, relief and rehabilitation for the community. This step was taken to pre-empt the inclusion of transgenders in mainstream society and job market. However, hiring of transgender workers has been slow because of prevalent negative social norms and the lack of market-relevant skills amongst the community.

### FACT

The fear of violence and harassment has led transgender people to live in tight-knit and isolated communities. Most transgender citizens do not register for documentation like CNIC cards, making it difficult to connect with community members, record their employment rates and access to public services.

### DEVELOPMENT

In 2018 the Supreme Court of Pakistan passed the Transgender Persons Act.

### PSDF'S ROLE

PSDF piloted a skills training program called "Grooming and Makeup Artist" for members of the transgender community. This specialized training is part of Umeed, programs under Umeed focus on uplifting marginalized youth for employability, empowerment and dignity.

### PSDF | UMEED

PSDF launched an inclusive and bold marketing campaign to resonate with its targeted beneficiaries. The campaign features images of transgender models in professional avatar challenging the stereotypical image of transgender people.

The objective of this training was to initiate engagement with the transgender community and launch a skill development program that trains participants in an inclusive and dignified way and ultimately opens income-generation pathways for them.





The skills training course was developed in consultation and based on feedback from the transgender community. Many people expressed interest in gaining skills to become professional make-up artists. Thus, the course was developed to train participants in grooming and makeup artistry skills. Many of our trainees were dependent on daily wages to earn a living and unable to afford the transportation cost to the trainings. To facilitate them, PSDF provided a travel allowance and stipend.



The overall results of the pilot project were positive, and trainees were able to secure jobs with popular salon chains like: Nirvana, Aramish, Sahi and Hair Mechanic.

## ENGAGING THE TRANS-COMMUNITY

Due to prevalent discrimination by the public, a general sense of distrust exists amongst the transgender community for people outside of their immediate circle. The prospective trainees were mobilized with the help of Aukwat, a grass-roots organization working with individuals from the transgender community, to raise awareness about PSDF's trainings. PSDF partnered with International Fashion Academy Pakistan to deliver the trainings. To build enthusiasm for the training amongst the trainees, popular model and social activist Mehreen Syed was brought on board as brand ambassador for this training.

## TRAINEE SUPPORT

Stipend Provided  
**4000 PKR**

Transportation Allowance  
**2500 PKR**

Makeup kits and loans provided in collaboration with SeedOut and ICare



To learn more about the trainee's stories head to PSDF's youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPoZjT6Wh7M>

## RESULTS

