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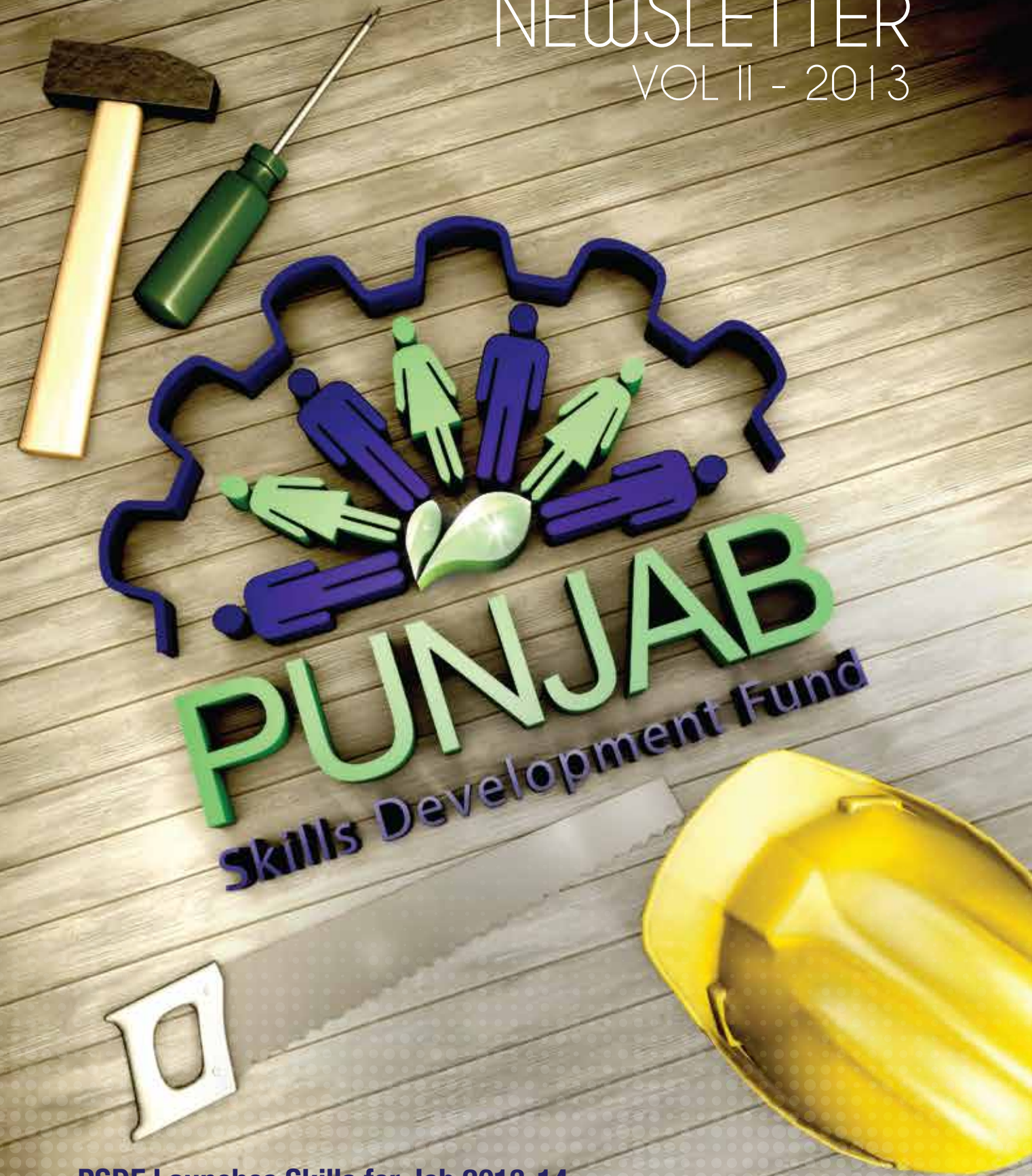
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NEWSLETTER  
VOL II - 2013



**PSDF Launches Skills for Job 2013-14...  
2,250 to be Trained Under Skills for Farms  
PSDF Signs Contract With Kamata Pakistan**



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Let me start with the good news that Punjab Skills Development Fund met its target of completing 20,000 trainings in the financial year 2012-13. This brings our cumulative number to 30,000. It is a matter of pride for all of us that PSDF was able to create an impact in the skill training market within a very short span, after its inception in January 2011. Our portfolio has expanded from two to three schemes targeting different beneficiaries. The Fund launched "Skills for Farms" (SFF) – a specialized scheme for the agriculture sector and initiated the second round for the "Skills for Jobs 2013-14" (SFJ) and "Skills for Market 2013-14" (SFM).

Our sponsors have now decided to expand PSDF operations to 10 more districts of Punjab that include Lahore, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Sheikhpura, Faisalabad and Chiniot. Four districts will be finalized in near future. The expansion of PSDF operations shows that the Fund has proved itself as a responsive, result-oriented organization, and is providing a viable route to livelihood to the poor and vulnerable populations of selected districts.

SFJ 2013-14 truly deserves to be named a demand-driven skills scheme as it benefits from the extensive household and firm demand research commissioned by DFID and completed in early 2013. The scheme seeks to encourage standardized and structured training while ensuring recognition of training received and streamlining the procurement process. We are strongly encouraging training providers to seek affiliations from accredited awarding bodies including international ones. Also, On-job-training has been made an integral part of all training courses under this scheme, which we hope will bridge the gap between training and the world of work.

Through SFM 2013-14, PSDF intends to fund trainings for 4,000 women in 200 designated villages spread all across our four southern districts. Under SFM, our aim is to improve the earning capability of women, enhance their self-confidence and equip them with core skills including literacy and numeracy. This experiment will be one of its kind – its innovations include integrating job specific training with

core skills and improving access through community-level support initiatives. Skills for Farms, our new product this year, intends to address the deficiency in skills offered by the TVET providers for the agriculture and livestock sectors. Under SFF, PSDF has signed contracts with seven providers for imparting farm-related training to 2,250 trainees. Classes will commence from September 16, 2013. As before, all our schemes will be widely advertised through appropriate mediums to have effective local outreach.

In the absence of state-provided employment search services, PSDF has decided to systematically integrate placement efforts with its core functions. A consultation session on feasibility of placement services called for starting such efforts at regional and local levels and focusing on informational products. PSDF has, therefore, established a placement services cell for marketing of its trainees. Our first step has been to sign a contract with Kamata Pakistan, Pakistan's first online job portal for blue-collared workers. Under this contract, PSDF will share data/profiles of its vocational trainees with Kamata Pakistan for exploring available jobs for trainees. Kamata Pakistan will also link potential employees with employers, thus offering matchmaking services.

PSDF regrets to inform our readers of the sudden demise of Mr. Asim Hussain, member Board of Directors PSDF. The PSDF family is deeply saddened by this loss and offers its condolences to his family and friends. Mr. Asim Hussain's efforts to expand PSDF activities were well appreciated and he will be remembered at all levels.

The Fund has always devoted serious efforts to the implementation and transparency of all its activities. A new debarring and delisting policy has been notified on our website for the information of all. Copies of all our annual audits conducted so far are also shared on our website.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Chairman Planning & Development Board, our Board of Directors, DFID colleagues and CERP researchers for their unremitting support and guidance of all our efforts during the past year. I look forward to a more productive and promising year ahead.

Ali Sarfraz  
CEO PSDF

## OVERVIEW

To mitigate the sufferings/deprivation of the masses of the target area (Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Muzaffargarh, Lodhran) and to raise income levels through a concrete strategy, the Government of the Punjab in collaboration with Department for International Development UK has set up Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF), a not-for-profit organization established under the Companies Ordinance 1984. To achieve its vision, PSDF aims to introduce different products for skills development in targeted districts. Its cross-cutting strategy is to promote competition in skills training market. The training services procured through the process will be focused on imparting skills which respond to the needs of the labour market. The funding and incentive structures shall ensure responsiveness from private, public and not-for-profit training providers.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PSDF is a corporate body established under Section 42 of the Companies Ordinance. Its Board is comprised of eminent professionals from the business world, civil society and academia. Four provincial secretaries are represented to ensure ownership and support by the public sector and create synergies with existing initiatives and policies.

Dr. Ijaz Nabi	(Chairman PSDF / Professor of Economics LUMS)
Mr. Baligh-ur-Rehman	(State Minister for Education)
Mr. Almas Haider	(CEO SPEL Group)
Mr. Faisal Farid	(Managing Director Maxim International)
Ms. Khawar Mumtaz	(CEO Shirkatgah)
Ms. Nadia Jamil	(Civil Society)
Mr. Jehanzeb Khan	(Secretary Finance)
Mr. Irfan Ali	(Secretary Industries)
Dr. Sajid Yoosufani	(Secretary Livestock)
Mr. Arif Anwar Baloch	(Secretary Planning & Development)
Mr. Ali Sarfraz	(Chief Executive Officer PSDF)

# PSDF LAUNCHES

## SKILLS FOR MARKET 2013 -14

LAHORE: "Skills for Market 2013-14" is a revised version of the same scheme launched last year under which 3,500 rural men and women were trained. PSDF remains committed to funding trainings for the marginalized and less educated by enrolling them in structured training programmes that are relevant for the local economy and combine job-specific skills training with core skills. As formal training schemes funded under SFJ and SFF have attracted more males than females, the SFM scheme, this year has been dedicated to women. Under SFM, PSDF's target is to train 4,000 rural women. Recognising the lack of basic skills amongst the target group, SFM prescribes a core skills curriculum covering literacy, numeracy and basic financial knowledge. There is no minimum educational requirement for admission.

The training delivery strategy adopted under SFM addresses barriers to training faced by rural women. According to evidence generated by Center for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP), training uptake is negatively associated with distance from the training centre as well as by social constraints (such as illness in the family, lack of child care etc.) and positively associated with desirability of a course. The trade offering of "tailoring" under SFM is based on revealed demand by rural women through the CERP survey. All trainings under the scheme will be delivered within villages and community mobilisation tools will be used for addressing social constraints, wherever possible. To meet quality concerns, SFM trainees will now follow a provincial (TEVTA-developed) curriculum.

Specific objectives of the scheme are:

- To meet the skills needs of the less literate and marginalized populations;
- To promote quality training by encouraging development of structured training products for the rural population;
- To address the issue of access to training opportunities by encouraging provision in remote areas;
- To add to the body of knowledge on skills development in rural areas and maximising its impact.

PSDF's financing covers two main categories of training related costs:

- Training Fees
- Trainee Support

The Training Fee chargeable on a per trainee basis is meant to finance trainer remuneration, consumables, manuals, management and reporting costs, rental/maintenance of machinery and equipment, utilities and miscellaneous items. Training Support covers a fixed stipend (Rs. 1,500 per trainee), 2 uniforms and a bag @ Rs. 1,500 per trainee. The training is expected to commence in December, 2013.



SCHEME

4000+  
Females to get training

Classes  
to start in December 2013



# PSDF LAUNCHES

## SKILLS FOR JOB 2013 -14 FOR THE TARGET DISTRICTS

LAHORE: After the success of the Skills for Jobs 2012-13, Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) launched the product with important revisions for the year 2013-14. SFJ 2013-14 targets training of 22,000 candidates, in diverse trades. The scheme has the objectives of encouraging standardized and structured training, ensuring recognition of training received and preparing vocational trainees for the world of work.

The Fund invited Expression of Interest (EOIs) through an open advertisement that appeared in all leading newspapers on May 5, 2013. The scheme was well-received especially in the private sector. Against the advertisement, a total of 181 Expressions of Interest (EOI) were received. A total of 103 organizations were found eligible and submitted their financial and technical proposals. Under the scheme, classes will commence from October 2013.

Trade targets for SFJ 2013-14 are based on an extensive, representative Employers' Survey conducted by the Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP). The survey used two samples: one drawn from a listing of enterprises by the Punjab Bureau of Statistics and the other from agricultural businesses in the pilot districts. The survey covers formal and informal, manufacturing, services and agriculture-based enterprises and is a useful resource for skills planning. SFJ 2013-14 requires providers to arrange on the job training for at least 50% of the trainees for a period of one month.

Following types of organizations were eligible to respond to the Expression of Interest invited by PSDF:

- Formal Training Institutes registered with any national / international accredited testing & certifying agency;
- Formal Training Institutes which are not registered but regularly conduct technical / vocational training courses;
- Public sector training institutes;
- HEC recognized universities;
- Legal entities in partnership with formal training institutes;
- Employers who have experience of training, such as apprentices training.

PSDF's financing covers two main categories of training related costs:

- A) Training Fees
- B) Trainee Support

The Training Fee paid on a per trainee basis is meant to finance trainer remuneration, consumables, manuals, management and reporting costs, rental/maintenance of machinery and equipment, utilities and training providers' arrangement of on-job-training.

Training Support covers a fixed stipend (Rs 1500 for day scholars and Rs 3000 for boarders receiving training outside the PSDF districts) and 2 uniforms and a bag.

Additionally, if training is conducted outside the target district, boarding & lodging, including meals for the trainees are to be arranged by the Training Service Provider as per specified standards.

In lieu of these services, training providers will be paid according to the following rates:

Rs. 7,000 per month per trainee, in case of Lahore / Rawalpindi / Islamabad Rs. 6,000 per month per trainee, in case of districts other than Lahore / Rawalpindi / Islamabad  
Rs. 9,000 per month per trainee, in case of Karachi.

PSDF will negotiate boarding costs in case of public sector entities. Classes are expected to start from October 1, 2013.



# SCHEME

## SFJ aims to train 2,250 in agriculture & livestock-related skills

LAHORE: In August 2013, PSDF signed contracts with 07 training service providers for provision of training to 2,250 eligible candidates. The contracts were signed for its new scheme – Skills for Farms (SFF). The Fund has procured services from these training service providers to impart training in trades relevant to agriculture & livestock sectors.

On behalf of PSDF, Chief Executive Officer Mr. Ali Sarfraz signed the SFF contracts with representatives from the selected training providers. PSDF will fund skills development on the basis of per trainee cost excluding capital expenditures. In return, the training providers will provide free training to eligible candidates from selected districts – Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Lodhran & Muzaffargarh. Classes for training courses will start from September 16, 2013. These selected candidates will be trained in 22 trades. The trainings will be delivered in five districts of Punjab – Bahawalpur, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, Kasur & Faisalabad.

Agriculture and livestock sectors contribute more than a quarter to Punjab's Gross Provincial Product and provide more than two-fifth of the jobs. Given the size and importance of the sector in the Punjab, vibrant and efficient agriculture and livestock sectors can play a significant role in poverty alleviation and enhancing prosperity. Since, it was felt that there is dearth of skilled labor in these sectors, PSDF organized a workshop last year to explore and understand skills needs for these sectors, the state of existing skills supply and options to stimulate a market-relevant supply of training that conforms to an acceptable and recognized quality assurance system.

SFF intends to address the deficiency in skills offered by the TVET providers for the agriculture and livestock sectors. External certification by an accredited agency or a university is mandatory as PSDF aims to improve the quality of skills training which will be beneficial in the long term for the economy at the macro level. A research study commissioned by the Fund reports that more than one-third of the surveyed households are interested in getting skills and vocational training in trades relevant to these sectors. Moreover, they expressed their preference for receiving training which is structured and formal i.e. delivered through a well-defined process using developed training & learning materials and delivered by formal trainers.

## Vocational courses to be provided by Training Providers

1. Kitchen Gardening
2. Grain Storage Management
3. Village Veterinary Worker
4. Tunnel Farming
5. Elementary Food Preservation
6. Pest Management
7. Farm Manager
8. Bio-Saline Agriculture
9. Vegetables Pest and Disease Management
10. Global Gap Implementation
11. Silage Making
12. Skilled Poultry Worker
13. Food Processing and Preservation Techniques
14. Post- Harvest Handling and Export Management of Mango
15. Agriculture Farm Management
16. Mango Orchard Management
17. Animal Nutrition Management
18. Dairy Herd Management
19. Poultry Farm Management
20. Artificial Insemination (Technician)
21. Nursery Development
22. Calf Fattening



LAHORE: Kaarvan Craft Foundation arranged a special exhibition to showcase the work of its PSDF-funded trainees enrolled under Skills for Market (SFM). The event was organized on April 18, 2013, at a local hotel in Lahore. Travelling all the way from Bahawalpur and Lodhran; a total of 15 trainees were selected to represent their groups, display their work and gain market exposure. Before the exhibition, the participants were trained in stall management, customer and sales dealings and basic concepts of retail management etc.

The invitees at the exhibition included vocational trainers, exporters, fashion design teachers, students and the general public. The items on display included cushion covers, table runners, mats, rugs, candles, handbags and stitched apparel for women and children. "I am amazed by the work done by these women. It is hard to believe that with little or no education they have achieved a lot in 6 months" remarked a student from a local art school. "I had a good time and I learnt a lot today. I would surely continue to work in this field and support my family"; said a trainee.

Punjab skills Development Fund (PSDF) also set up a stall at the event where our communication team informed visitors about PSDF interventions launched for the target districts. At the end of the exhibition, Manager Technical PSDF, Mr. Aftab Ahmed visited each stall and asked the trainees about their experience. Their enthusiasm and satisfaction spoke volumes of the change brought about by their training experience funded by PSDF.

The visitors commended the efforts of the female trainees for striving for a better tomorrow and initiating a change in the society by participating in the labour force, despite social constraints.

## KAARVAN organizes an exhibition for PSDF trainees



## PSIC invites PSDF to display its trainees' artwork

LAHORE: Punjab Skills Development Fund participated in "Kamal-e-Fun"; a three-day arts and crafts exhibition which was organized on March 16, 2013, at Old Tollington Market Lahore. The event was inaugurated by Dr. Shujat Ali, Secretary Industries, Government of the Punjab. The exhibition marked the arrival of spring and 40 years of Punjab Small Industries Corporation's (PSIC). The event was designed to promote local culture and artisans.

PSDF team set up a stall to showcase the artwork of its trainees enrolled in the Fashion Designing Course by Step Institute of Art & Design. The products displayed included paintings, sketches, patchwork and stitched clothes depicting a fusion between modern and local artwork. The exhibition also gave PSDF trainees an opportunity to learn and engage in commercial dealings because many of their products were sold on the spot. Many other organizations participated in the festival and setup stalls, but PSDF stood out amongst all due to the distinctive work of its trainees.

The trainees' efforts not only impressed professionals associated with vocational training and arts & crafts industry but also the general public who showed up in great numbers to appreciate the effort.



# NEWS

## PSDF Technical Team organizes pre-proposal conferences in different cities

LAHORE: In the year 2013, Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) with Multan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, launched new rounds for its products: Skills for Jobs (SFJ) and Skills for Market (SFM).

In order to maximize participation from private training providers and to improve their capacity to respond to its call for proposals, PSDF organized "Pre-Proposal Conferences" in different cities of Punjab. The PSDF Technical Team travelled across Punjab to organize different sessions in Bahawalpur, Multan, Lahore and Islamabad.

The main objective of the conferences was to help the providers understand documentary requirements for the proposal and to clarify any misunderstandings.

Skills development has traditionally been funded under a project mode without competition. It was therefore, essential to expose the shortlisted entities to the competitive method adopted by PSDF.

The first conference was held in collaboration with Bahawalpur Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Bahawalpur. 70 local, private and public sector training services providers attended the conference. PSDF organized the second conference in Multan in collaboration

with Multan Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

A total of 40 providers participated in the session. The third conference was organized in Lahore, and was attended by 50 providers. The last conference was held in Islamabad in collaboration with the National Training Bureau (NTB). The session was attended by 45 training services providers.

The conferences provided a good understanding to prospective service providers about the engagement modalities of SFJ. Further, the conferences provided a feedback mechanism for PSDF through its old service providers.

Training Service providers of schemes executed in 2012-13 report a positive change in their internal procedures and systems following their engagement with PSDF.

# EVENTS





# Service providers stage ceremonies to acknowledge successful trainees

LAHORE: In the financial year 2012-13, PSDF launched two new products for the target districts. The total target of these new schemes, Skills for Job & Skills for Market, was 22,000 trainees. A total of 20,052 individuals completed their training in these two schemes. To date a total of 30,520 have successfully acquired new skills. The vocational training and skill development programs funded by PSDF are a landmark step towards the progress and prosperity of the target districts - Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Muzaffargarh and Lodhran.

The training programs are targeted to achieve prosperity by stimulating the economic activity in the target region. PSDF is striving to provide equal opportunities to both men and women. Under PSDF's various schemes, more than 12,000 female trainees have completed their training in trades like tailoring, beautician, fashion designing, fabric printing, photo and imaging etc. Determined to achieve greater success in life, these trainees will motivate and bring hope to other women of their area.

In order to celebrate the achievements of its trainees, our Training Service Providers (TSPs) held certificate distribution ceremonies at their different locations. Some of the snapshots from these events are given on the next page:



## EVENTS



ISLAMABAD

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Baleegh-ur-Rehman, State Minister for Education, Training and Standards in Higher Education, addresses PSDF trainees at the opening ceremony by Ladies Social Welfare Organization.



BAHAWALPUR

BAHAWALPUR: Mr. Shoaib Mohsin, Manager Monitoring PSDF, awards a certificate to a trainee at a ceremony which was organized by the College of Arts & Design, Islamia University of Bahawalpur.



SHEIKHUPURA

SHEKHUPURA: Mr. Jan Muhammad, SSP National Highways & Motorway Police, presents a certificate to a trainee at a certificate distribution ceremony.



ISLAMABAD

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Reinhard Barutzki, International Consultant of Technical & Vocational Training from Germany, poses for a group photo with successful trainees at Resource Access.



LAHORE

LAHORE: Mr. Ali Akbar Bosan, Manager Human Resources PSDF, and Mr. Hafiz Wasi Muhammad Khan, President Pakistan Agriculture Scientists Forum, pose for a group photo with successful trainees at a ceremony organized by Solve Agri Pvt Ltd.



## CERP'S rigorously conducted survey to guide product design for the year 2013-2014

The Government of Punjab and DFID entered into a unique, collaborative arrangement with the Center for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP) to meet the evidence needs of Punjab Skills Development Fund. A large, representative sample of employers was a critical input to ascertain demand for skills in our four pilot districts.

CERP drew a sample of 7,566 enterprises from a listing of all businesses in 860 urban and rural primary sampling units (PSUs) conducted by the Punjab Bureau of Statistics. These sample enterprises included farm holdings held away from the populated settlements. The survey was intended to provide rich data to PSDF for designing interventions for the year 2013.14. Some of the salient findings from the survey are given below.

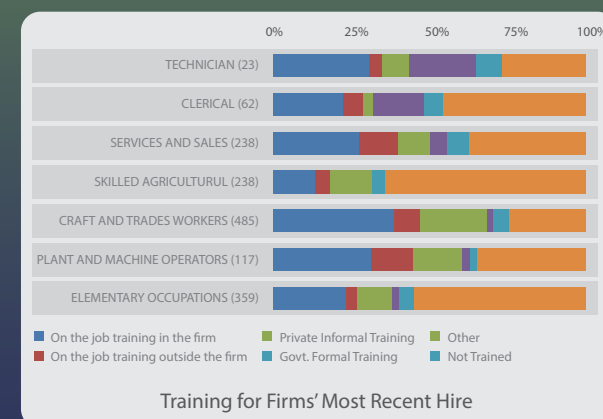
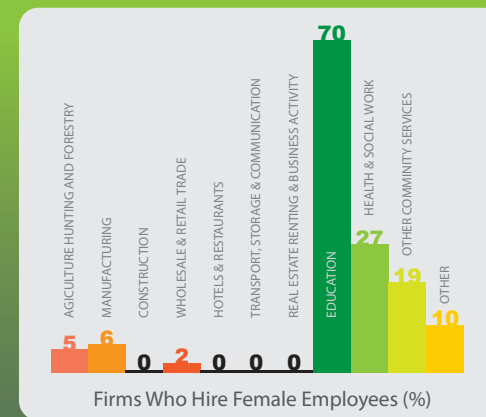
### Firm Demographics

The Employer Survey collected basic demographic information for formal and informal establishments. This information was important to understand the potential for increasing employment in the region. The results obtained were consistent with the broad patterns expected in these districts and provide an in-depth picture of the potential labor market for skilled individuals.

The survey also suggested that predictably, two-thirds of the firms in the sample identify the poor quality of infrastructure, like roads and electricity supply, as a severe obstacle to growth. More importantly, one-fifth of the firms reported that the lack of skilled labor and the cost of hiring trained labor were major concerns. Hence, while the firms in the region have a high desire for expansion, working on the skills of the labour force does not offer a complete solution. According to the demographics; women-owned businesses make up a tenth of all the firms in the region. 75% of these women-owned businesses are engaged in the production sector and only 5% of them have employees. Further, most of the business establishments in the area are single-worker firms, approximately 80%. Multiple-worker firms have, on average, 3 workers per firm. Multiple-worker firms also express a strong desire to expand the size of their businesses. To generate more jobs would require partnering with other government programs.

### Current State of the Workforce

Analyzing the current state of the workforce in the region, the survey findings suggested that the current workforce is not meeting the skill requirements of the firms in the region and that there are little opportunities for women. In particular, two-fifths of the firms report that their workers are less than fully proficient in job-specific skills. This implies a big opportunity to enhance skill levels in the region. The main reason cited by firms for their workers' poor performance is their lack of experience. Further, a very large majority of firms employ men only. Only 8.6% of multiple-worker firms employ women, though women make up 13.5% of the employed workforce (and 14.3% of the total workforce including single-worker firms). Females are mostly concentrated in the services sector. Almost 22% of the firms active in the services sector employ women, while only 6% of those in



# SURVEY

production and 2% of those in retail employ women. In addition, most multiple-worker firms express a preference for hiring men.

The survey suggested that demand for skilled labor exists, at least within firms that currently employ people. Multiple-worker firms expressed a strong demand for skills: 44% need job specific skills and 30% need people with basic core skills. In comparison, single-worker firms have a relatively modest demand for skilled workers: 11% expressed a desire to hire someone with a specific skill and 23% of the self-employed expressed a desire to get training. Also, firms expressed a preference for training certification from government providers over private training providers. Firms also expressed widespread interest in employing people for a trial period -probation. Doing so was in fact their preferred way to vet potential employees. In short, a general demand for skilled labor exists and the quality of labor is seen by firms as a major problem.

### Hiring Practices

In terms of the hiring practices, the main findings of the survey are that firms are hiring very frequently, 85% of the multiple-worker firms hired someone last year and, on average, they hired between 2 and 3 people. Across all types of jobs that PSDF might train people for, turnover is high and hiring is very frequent. Search of hiring is local. Multiple-worker firms mostly hire people through their own network, by contacting people from the same village or through friends. When firms were prompted about how they would like to improve their search of employees, the respondents strongly preferred taking more apprentices on board and bringing people on for trial periods.

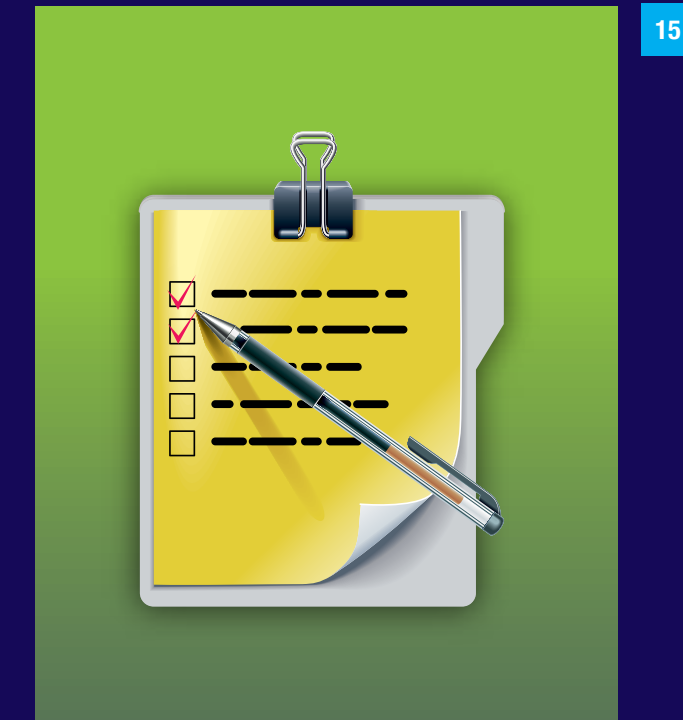
### Training Practices

An important feature of the Employer Survey is that it asked firms how they train their workers. It was found that most firms engage in substantial on-the-job training. Depending on job category, between 50-70% of firms trained their most recently hired employee. Firms perceive a distance constraint to acquiring skills training. Of those willing to send an employee for training, 70% are willing to send existing employees for training if the training center is located within an hour while only 15% are willing to send them to a location three hours or more away.

Most firms place a high value on core skills. Almost no individual who lacks basic core skills is employed by employers in the region. According to the CERP baseline household survey, 20% of the male population and 45% of the female population in the PSDF region lacks basic core skills. Overall the data suggests that some of the most effective interventions to increase skills may involve working directly with firms to increase their capacity to train and this could benefit both existing and potential workers.

### Potential for Firms to Serve as Training Providers

The report finally provides data on the potential for firms to serve as training providers. A key challenge for PSDF lies in reaching a sufficiently large population of potential trainees without requiring them to travel. As the baseline household survey showed, time and distance are the key constraints on the demand for skills training among potential trainees. A number of responses to the survey suggest that existing firms and businesses can likely be mobilized to provide training. Currently, majority of small firms provide on-the-job training to employees and are willing to do so despite the high observed turnover. Overall, 70% of surveyed firms expressed a willingness to serve as training providers. Among the firms



willing to provide training, 75% would do so at a price of Rs. 10,000 per trainee. For those firms that refused, lack of time was one of the main reasons that were cited. Thus, there is great potential in mobilizing small enterprises to provide distributed training in the region.

### Implications

On the whole, these findings suggest several types of interventions that could have immediate impact. Some interventions that CERP recommend include zero-distance training. Employers have expressed a strong preference for training workers close to their business establishment and a large fraction is willing to either provide training or make their facility available for such training. CERP's ongoing evaluation on zero-distance training in Skills for Market program suggests that uptake will be much higher in these places. Firms' widespread interest in employing people for trial periods suggests an avenue for PSDF interventions on the placement front. A month or more of placement in one of these firms is likely to help in job placement either with the firm itself or within its network. Training plus financing is another recommendation. Hiring is often seen as requiring capital investments; hence the combination of trained employees plus financing opportunities could be very powerful. This combination may be particularly important for enhancing female employment as few firms in the region hire women. More effective interventions to help women will likely require providing the skills and capital to generate self-employment opportunities or match them to firms who are willing to buy their products. Further, Job search and placement support for trained employees should be created that links them to potential employment opportunities. Also, given a high proportion of the poor and vulnerable population that lacks core skills, it seems like a modest investment in providing core skills that may enable a large number of these individuals to enter the workforce.

On the whole the survey also suggests that worker retention seems to be a huge problem faced by firms in the PSDF region. One possible reason for high turnover is that firms are not finding people with the skills they need PSDF training may be able to remedy the human capital portion of this problem.





## Partnership for Placement

LAHORE: On 4th June, 2013, a contract signing ceremony between Punjab Skills Development Fund and Kamata Pakistan (job portal) was organized at the PSDF Head Office. On behalf of PSDF, Mr. Ali Sarfraz, CEO PSDF, signed the contract with Mr. Muhammad Raza Saeed, CEO Confiz Solutions, parent company of Kamata Pakistan. Under the contract, PSDF will share data/profiles of its vocational trainees with Kamata Pakistan for exploring job opportunities. Kamata Pakistan will link potential employees with employers, thus offering matchmaking services. The collaboration is one of its kind to open new avenues for the unemployed and new labour market entrants.

Studies reveal that workers skilled in vocational trade have limited access to employment networks restricting their ability to find relevant jobs. On the other hand, employers sometimes face immense difficulties in finding the right worker. PSDF has taken an innovative step by exploring the potential of a web-based job portal for the employment of its funded trainees.

Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) aims to improve income generation opportunities and reduce poverty in Southern Districts of Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Lodhran and Muzaffargarh by enabling skills development through promotion of a competitive skills training market. At present, more than 26,000 trainees have completed their trainings which were imparted by different training service providers (TSPs) in various trades that include: Welder, Machinist, Electrician, Chefs, Secretarial Studies, Computer Hardware and Network Professional, and Steel Fixer etc.

Kamata Pakistan ([www.kamatapakistan.com](http://www.kamatapakistan.com)) is a web and mobile start-up dedicated to bringing better job opportunities to the blue-collared job sector (cooks, technicians, welders, helpers, office boys, factory labour, etc.) by connecting employers and job seekers via various digital media - website, SMS and social networks. Employers are encouraged to use the portal to convey their human resource needs and can expect to receive referrals of workers with genuine, accredited trade qualifications.

Post your jobs at [www.kamatapakistan.com](http://www.kamatapakistan.com) and get connected with suitable candidates.



## Quality Assurance through Trade Tests

The Punjab Board of Technical Education, the provincial testing and certification agency has signed an MOU with Punjab Skills Development Fund for testing and certification of its trainees under the Skills for Job Scheme. For PSDF, testing by an independent agency ensures that a uniform standard is being followed and that learning outcomes are being attained. Results from trade tests are also a tool for instructional assessment for individual institutes and are measured and reported as part of our comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system. PBTE extends the facility in far-flung districts through independent assessors and maintains a dedicated cell for PSDF.

For trainees, benefits of testing through PBTE are that it provides mobility to those who are able to access jobs nationally and internationally on the basis of their accredited qualifications. Accredited testing system which enjoys the confidence of employers can also be expected to replace the expensive and duplicative testing systems set up by employers to screen potential employees. Trainees examination record is entered in the permanent database of the Board and they can be issued duplicate certificates any time in future in case of loss.

As of August, 2013, 5889 students appeared in trade tests held by the Punjab Board. Courses were of three and six months' duration. The overall pass percentage was 88%.

Table: Summary of PSDF Trainees Tested by PBTE under the Skills for Job Scheme

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Results announcement	Number Appeared	Number Passed	Pass Percentage
Jan-13	1466	1179	80%
Apr-13	2893	2671	92%
Jun-13	1530	1344	88%
Grand Total	5889	5194	88%

Source: PBTE Gazettes

More than 10% of SFJ trainees will be tested by international testing agencies such as City and Guilds, Ed Excel and London Chamber of Commerce.

QUALITY ASSURANCE



Mr. Asim Hussain  
(late)

## An exemplary commitment for public service

LAHORE: On April 25, 2013, the Punjab Skills development Fund (PSDF) team suffered a major loss with the demise of one of its Board members; Mr. Asim Hussain. Mr. Hussain joined the PSDF team on January 23, 2013.

Known for his exceptional command over national and international brands and retail businesses, Mr. Asim Hussain held office as CEO Agrow (Pvt.) Ltd. His key areas of expertise included franchise development, marketing and retailing experience, brand & channel development.

After graduating from Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) as MBA, Mr. Hussain ventured to be an entrepreneur and became successful at a very young age. He had an ambitious approach of disseminating and sharing his experiences with the youth in order to develop their interest in the fields of brand and retail management. His dedication and determination to his field was not just limited to business matters; Mr. Asim Hussain regularly participated in various educational seminars as a guest speaker. As a new addition to the PSDF Board, he was enthusiastically looking forward to make his contributions for the betterment of the less privileged.

Chairman PSDF, Dr Ijaz Nabi conveyed his heartfelt condolences to his family on behalf of the Board and the PSDF Management and stated that his demise was a sad loss for the business world as well as they had lost a leader and a trail blazer. His intellectual insights and in-depth knowledge gave the PSDF Board a unique strength that will surely be missed.



## PSDF training enabled me to open up a beauty parlor, says Sajida



BAHWALPUR: Sajida, a resident of Bahawalpur district, comes from a rural area within the district where girls are married off at an early age. Unfortunately, her marriage ended in a divorce bringing her back to her parents' home who were already hard-pressed to meet their financial needs. She then underwent a difficult patch in her life when she started avoiding social gatherings. Sajida learnt about AI - Kausar Welfare Organization which was offering free vocational trainings in the village for women. Sajida went to AI-Kausar's office, collected basic information about the programs and decided to enroll in the Beautician Course. She was informed that the course was completely free and it was being funded by Punjab Skills Development Fund – a joint initiative of Government of the Punjab and UK's Department for International Development.

The fact that Sajida would get 6 months training within her village as well as Rs. 1,500 as stipend was a major motivator for her. She realized that this could be her window of opportunity. Sajida started her training with fervor. After the successful completion of the training, she sold one of her buffalos and started a small beauty parlor near her home. Today Sajida is a proud owner of a running, profitable business and an inspiration for many young girls in the vicinity. She earns more than Rs. 15,000/- per month, and also extends financial support to her parents. She was able to turn her luck around with the training that she received through PSDF funding. She told PSDF that many females in the area admire her for the courage and strength, and how she dealt with the tough situation in her life.

When asked about the training program she remarked, "I had no idea that 6 months of training would change my life dramatically. I've no words to express my gratitude for PSDF for sponsoring my training."

## I'm working in UAE and earning a good salary just because of PSDF, says Nasir



Bahawalpur: 26-year-old Nasir Abbas is visiting Pakistan from Qatar. Talking to PSDF, he is reminiscent of the days when he was looking for odd jobs so that he may be able to buy a meal for his family. After his matriculation, he was unable to find a suitable job. His only source of income was occasional labour work. Being the eldest son, his responsibilities were increasingly burdening him. His father, a poor farmer, was unable to support his family that comprised of his wife and five children. His sister's wedding had to be put off due to financial constraints.

Till 2012, Nasir had no high hope for his future. But one day when he left home with friends, he caught a glimpse of a banner announcing PSDF-funded programs. Nasir's friends did not think much of the opportunity but he decided to act upon his instincts and rang up the advertised toll-free number. He acquired basic information about the training programs and their eligibility criteria. When asked about his trade of interest by call center agent, Nasir responded that he wished to enroll in a Welding Course.

He took admission in the Welding 6G (pipe welding course) which was offered by Descon Institute of Technical Training. The course was considered to be one of the toughest training courses because it required physical stamina and after completion, the trainees are supposed to work under extreme conditions. Nasir's trainers were skeptical of his performance due to his physique but as he was determined to complete his training, Nasir not only completed his training but also was hired for a project in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

After his arrival in the UAE, he had the chance to work on several projects in the UAE and Qatar. Nasir's family income increased from mere Rs. 2,000/- a month to Rs. 40,000/- per month. He helped his father with necessary investments to improve earnings from their small piece of land. He also helped his family in buying a few assets. He is now funding education of his siblings and purchased dowry items for his sister's marriage. "Three months of training financed by PSDF has changed my world; I had never imagined that one day I'll travel to the UAE for work," said Nasir in his interview with the PSDF Communications team.

Today Nasir is doing well compared to his friends who did not avail the opportunity. He can speak Arabic and feels that he has a bright future ahead of him. "PSDF training program helped me stay on the right track otherwise I would have been lost to drugs like my many friends. I also want my younger brother to join a PSDF-funded training program so that he can achieve his dreams of a better life like me", said Nasir.

## PSDF training enabled me to become a permanent employee of the textile industry, says Shehzad



Shehzad Mehmood, a 26-year-old, belongs to a small village near Muzaffargarh district. His father is a retired government servant. The family of nine persons is dependent on the father's pension. Being handicapped, Shehzad's elder brother was unable to contribute to the household financially. Due to financial troubles, his three sisters could not complete their education.

Shehzad along with his younger brother worked as a daily wage laborer to earn Rs. 200/- a day. Finding work was tough and marked with uncertainty. One day, his friends told him about an announcement offering free vocational training courses. Both brothers visited the village market and again found out about PSDF-funded training programs that were being offered by Pakistan Knitwear Training Institute.

Shehzad and his four friends took admission in the three-month Knitting Machine Operators Training Course. All four came to Lahore for training in September 2012. Shehzad completed his training in December 2012. Upon completion of his training course, PKTI arranged a certificate ceremony that was attended by representatives from known textile mills. Guests were briefed about the training course and its content. Upon seeing the progress of PSDF-funded trainees, the representatives showed interest in hiring fresh graduates. Shehzad was hired by M/S Irfan Textiles in January 2013. He was offered a salary of Rs. 12,000/- per month along with other perks and accommodation.

His family's combined income is now Rs. 20,000. He has plans to repair his house, and is also in a position to contribute towards his sister's wedding expenses. Shehzad has decided to stay in Lahore and continue working in the textile industry; he has also decided to send his younger sisters to school so that they can have a better future.

"PSDF-funded training has been a god-sent opportunity. It paved the way for getting a job in the textile industry which now provides me a permanent and stable income. Me and my friends are very grateful to PSDF for thinking of people like us," said Shehzad.

## I got a job in the Middle East after PSDF-funded training, says Aslam



LODHRAN: South Punjab has the highest incidence of poverty when compared with other regions in Punjab. Its economy is mostly rural, with very few growing businesses offering jobs to new entrants in the labour market. Thus, finding a suitable employment is a difficult task. Life of Imran Aslam, a resident of Lodhran, was also greatly affected by the job conditions of his area like many others. He could not continue his education after matriculation as his family was unable to afford it. His father, a poor farmer, was unable to bear expenses of his household without borrowing loans which led to extra financial burden on the family.

Being the eldest son, Aslam searched for work so that he might be able to earn a living. However, employers that he approached were reluctant to hire an unskilled worker. His disappointment and desperation was growing by the day. He finally started to help his father on their agriculture land. One day when he switched on the radio, Aslam heard an advertisement about free-of-cost training programs which were being offered with PSDF funding.

The next day, he spent his time inquiring about these free training programs and finally came home to discuss the possibility of enrolling in one of them. He also told his father that he would be getting a stipend during his training period. Aslam wanted to join the Industrial Electrician course. The training institute was in Islamabad so he had to travel to the capital city. His father was not optimistic but still allowed him to commence his training.

He joined the course which was imparted by a private training institute (Resource Access) in March, 2013. Aslam completed his training in May and graduated with good marks. On the occasion of his graduation ceremony, the training service provider announced job opportunities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on behalf of a client. The test and interview process was rigorous and Aslam proved his mettle by qualifying for Emrill Integrated Facilities Management, a company based in the UAE. He was offered a handsome salary package that included perks like free medical, transport and accommodation etc.

Aslam left for the UAE in June and his family income jumped from Rs. 10,000/- to 1,500 dirhams (approximately Rs. 41,000/). He has been paying his father's debts and supporting his family. Aslam is still in the UAE and wants to settle down there for a brighter future.

# SUCCESS STORIES