

TRANScend, an initiative by The Humsafar Trust and supported by Publicis Sapient, aims to enhance socio-economic inclusion of transgender people in India. It works towards enhancing inclusivity and acceptance of transgender communities in India through research and intervention into the socioeconomic and educational needs of community, skills and capacity building, sensitization of stakeholders (corporates and educational institutions), and providing the pathways to accessing services like Aadhaar cards, PAN, cards, changes of gazette details (name, gender, etc), and bank accounts.

The pilot phase of TRANScend, supported by Publicis Sapient (then Sapient India), kickstarted in June 2017 and was implemented in Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore. As part of this pilot phase, a first of its kind baseline research on socio-economic needs of the transgender community in India was conducted using quantitative survey with 518 transpersons and qualitative in-depth interviews with 17 transpersons in Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai. The research was conducted by community researchers from partner organisations who were duly trained in conducting scientific research by the HST research team.

In addition to the training of Research investigators, two more capacity building workshops were conducted and a total of 63 transpersons, representatives from the partner CBOs and Transmen representatives from the three project sites, attended these 3 workshops on legal awareness, advocacy strategies, creating and strengthening Transgender Welfare Boards (TWB), effective use of social media in branding and running campaigns and effective interaction with print and electronic media.

163 transpersons were enrolled in 17 skill building programs in Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore in the pilot phase of the project. An important part of this process was to sensitize institutions conducting these courses and ensure that the transgender persons are able to become part of the skills development programs without being subjected to issues of stigma and discrimination.

Drawing from the work done by The Humsafar Trust to create awareness on gender and sexuality in health care set ups, legal spaces and with other stakeholders, we developed more specialized content to target [educational institutes](#) and [corporations](#), especially around issues of transgender inclusion. The [manuals created under TRANScend](#) formed the basis of a module developed to conduct awareness and sensitisation workshops in the three project sites of Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore. A total of 37 workshops were conducted (15 with educational institutes and 22 with corporates) with 1089 people attending these workshops.

610 social entitlement and identity documents were made for transgender individuals in Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi. These included Aadhar Card, PAN card, Voter ID, Karnataka Government WCD loan, Bank accounts, BPL Ration card, Caste certificates, Gender certificate and Name change in gazette.

Some of the major challenges faced in the pilot phase of TRANScend included difficulties in obtaining social entitlement documents like Aadhar cards, pan cards, etc due to lack of personal documents and ID and address proofs and bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining documents in the preferred gender identity. Additionally, Aadhar centres in Delhi and Mumbai had been non-functional for the past couple of months. Absence of Aadhar cards had put a halt to processing other ID cards as well. In certain cases, we conducted advocacy with bureaucrats and politicians. Advocacy with local politicians and bureaucrats in order to arrive at innovative means of obtaining social entitlement documents have also resulted in the visibility of the project and holds promise for their support in the subsequent phases of the project.

Skill building programmes too progressed at a rather slow pace because of lack of feasible alternative sources of livelihoods offered by existing skill building programmes resulting in low uptake of the courses by the community. We needed to be creative and we looked for unconventional sources of skill building like entrepreneurship driven courses and collaborations between multiple entities to arrive at programmes that suited the needs of the community meaningfully. We facilitated partnerships between varied agencies in different geographies to customise skill building programmes that suit the needs and requirements of the community. An example in the partnership between VLCC and Beauty and Wellness Sector Skills Council (an arm of PMKVY) to organize Beauty and Wellness courses in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

The second phase of TRANScend, started from April 2018, and aimed at a gradual evolution of TRANScend from a project to an initiative. A larger pool of community-based organisations and groups were involved in TRANScend through seed grants for innovative ideas and other advocacy activities designed and developed by the CBOs responding to needs of the community in their respective geographical areas.

We made significant progress in our engagement with corporates on workplace inclusion of transgender persons. It is also aimed towards initiating a structured process of advocacy with educational institutes and corporates drawing from the successful development of manuals and modules for sensitization of and experience of conducting workshops with 37 such entities in the pilot phase. A new activity that was initiated under TRANScend was to organise roundtable discussions between corporates and the community. In the pilot phase, need to initiate a dialogue between the two emerged in order to facilitate meaningful inclusion of transpersons in workplaces. The initial roundtables focussed on the overall discussion on challenges faced by the two parties in achieving their goals of inclusion and sharing of best practices and success stories. However, as the initiative matures gradually, these roundtables will focus more and more on thematic areas of addressing specific challenges like policies around transition, insurance, workplace communication, charting a career growth path for trans-employees and so on.

In addition to corporates and educational institutes, we reached out to several other stakeholders as well and conducted sensitisations on gender and sexuality. This phase saw an initiation of policy advocacy which is envisioned to become a cornerstone of our work in the years to come where we will primarily be advocating towards large scale policy changes and policy making with government stakeholders based on needs that emerge during our course of work under TRANScend.

In the coming years, TRANScend will focus greatly on consolidating the capacities of the CBOs on conducting advocacy activities and further developing their capacities on resource mobilization to scale up their advocacy activities. TRANScend, as an initiative, is committed to encouraging greater community ownership, facilitating partnerships between the community and various stakeholders like corporates, educational institutes, judiciary, bureaucrats and providing a platform for addressing the ever-evolving needs of the transgender community through ongoing research and intervention.