

A background image of two men. The man on the left is wearing a black shirt and a red lanyard, holding a framed Microsoft certification plaque. The man on the right is wearing a red jacket and a black beanie with a smiley face. The entire image has a red overlay.

GIVE BACK GRANT: KASHMIR

SOFTWARE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

THE PROJECT

To enhance the quality and employability of Kashmiri youth from underprivileged backgrounds, the Kashmir team launched a software skills development program as their Give Back Grant initiative.

This program trained youth who had completed their secondary education in market-relevant skills, giving them a chance at better employment opportunities.



INDIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

In countries such as India, which has one of the world's largest workforces and where technological expertise is essential to economic success, there is a severe lack of appropriately trained young professionals in the region's less developed states, such as Jammu & Kashmir.

With more than 46.9% of Kashmir's population under 25 and only 10% of new graduates employed, the remaining 90% lack the skills required for corporate work.

As a result, skill training is recognised as one of the most significant factors that will help to secure employment in Kashmir.

Securing employment in less developed countries can be challenging for young people with limited skills. The difficulty arises from the fact that job opportunities may be few and competition can be tough. Hence, to boost their chances of finding work, it becomes essential for young people to expand and improve their skill sets, allowing them to meet the demands of the job market and increase their employability prospects.

Although conventional academic courses offer such training, these are few in number, are not often up to date, and do not necessarily cater to many students, particularly those from low-income households.



WHO IS HUSSAIN KASHMIR'S SOLUTION

After thoroughly researching the extent of the problem and acknowledging the Kashmiri youth's needs, the team created the software skills development program.

With software skills in high demand and offering lucrative opportunities, the team wanted to equip qualifying students with a greater chance of accessing such opportunities, potentially setting them up for life.

By conducting research and designing surveys to determine the needs, the team satisfied the criteria they set to undertake the program.

An initiative of this scale was always going to be a challenge. Without sacrificing their regular stream of activities, the Kashmir team started designing and implementing the program immediately.

Splitting into 3 sub-teams, each managing a different aspect of the project, they meticulously organised the entire initiative.

Stage 1: Screening and Recognition

After announcing the program on social media, the team had scores of youth interested in joining. A rigorous screening process subsequently helped to enlist 30 passionate and ambitious students for a selection of courses ranging from Basic Computer Applications, Website Development, and Graphic Design, among others.



Stage 2: Establishing the Training Centre

Finding a study centre was next on the team's agenda. They swiftly secured a centre in Srinagar and installed the necessary equipment, which provided a **conducive learning environment**. Alongside this, the various sub-teams organised other logistics, such as enlisting qualified teachers/trainers that would be a good fit for the student's learning needs. Although challenging, the team created the syllabus and timetables, taking into account the availability of both teachers and students.

Stage 3: Skill Development and Training

Once the courses had begun, the team took it upon themselves to **check in periodically with students**, gauging their feedback and making any necessary adjustments. One such issue that arose was a decline in attendance. Upon feedback, the team chose to switch to weekend sessions to maximise attendance. The team also held **interactive sessions to motivate students** and share with them the widespread benefits of the program.

Stage 4: Exams and Certification

To validate their learning and give students a **boost of confidence in their abilities**, the team collaborated with the **internationally renowned education provider Pearson Vue** and a governmental body, the Institute of Computer Science and Technical Education, to provide certifications for students. These certifications would significantly boost the chances for students to apply for corporate sector jobs and enable them to move onto advanced learning modules.

Stage 5: Convocation and Awards Ceremony

Students' efforts and achievements were celebrated during the team's Annual End of Year gathering at an **inspiring awards ceremony**. Certificates were awarded to the students, guaranteeing their new qualifications. With **smiles all around**, the profound success of this program was remarkable.

AN IMPACT BEYOND MEASURE

Empowering students, boosting their confidence, and bolstering their career prospects was exactly what this program sought to achieve. And it did. The skills, training, and knowledge imparted during the program, not only through skills workshops but through the nurturing nature in which it was done, have had a **lifelong impact**. Students who completed the program gained confidence and had a more positive outlook on life and their ability to become self-sufficient.

With a platform to build upon their careers, graduates can further their studies or even use their newly developed skills to be self-employed, generating an income as freelancers.



ANIKA'S STORY

Anika's progress truly epitomises the success and positive impact of this program. Unfamiliar with even basic computer skills, Anika embarked on a journey that led to her proficiency in Microsoft Office to the extent that she became a **certified Microsoft Associate**.

Throughout this program, Anika and other students received comprehensive training in various aspects of computer-based skills. Students received tailored training in Microsoft Office, web development, and graphic design. For Anika, her focus was on building on the technical skills centred around Microsoft Office. By enrolling in the program, she was able to boost her confidence to use these skills independently.



"I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt thanks for the incredible Software Skills Development Programme. Your dedication to providing a rich learning experience truly stood out. The diverse range of skills covered and the thoughtful approach to each topic made a significant impact on my growth. I appreciate the effort and passion invested in empowering individuals like me. The skills I've gained are invaluable, and I feel more equipped for success in my professional journey. I feel more confident in my abilities now. Thank you once again to Who is Hussain for your commitment to excellence." - Anika

TAKING THINGS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Ultimately, the students showcased the program's success and impact to such an extent that representatives of various national organisations have since expressed their interest in taking this program to the next level, securing many more futures of youth from underprivileged circumstances. This is a true testament to the program's success and the dedication and great efforts of the Who is Hussain team in Kashmir.

Initiatives like this empower individuals and secure futures that would not be possible without the support of our generous communities.

Please consider contributing so we can positively impact the lives of many more:
<https://whoishussain.org/donate/>

