

Gendered Pathways to Prosperity:

Breaking the Boundaries to Further Education and Employment Among Dalit Minority Girls in Lahore, Pakistan

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Introduction and Context



Pakistan Flag

Project Partners, Background, Aims and Goals

Project Partners

Lancaster, United Kingdom

Lahore, Pakistan



Background

- **Pakistan** is the fifth-largest country by population, home to 240 million people with diverse ethnic and minority groups with approx. 40% of the population in urban areas and 60% in rural regions.
- **Punjab**, with **Lahore** as its capital, is the largest province in Pakistan and hosts over half of the country's population.
- **Religious Minorities or Non-Muslims**, comprise only 4% of Pakistan's population, primarily Dalits and specifically Christians, have traditionally been employed in menial jobs such as sanitation.



Sanitation Shafiq Masih in a manhole

Breaking Boundaries: Aims and Goals

Primary Aim:



*Prosperity Fellows on the day of their graduation:
May 31, 2024*

Breaking the boundaries to further education and employment among **Dalit Minority girls** whose communities are stuck in **descent-based menial occupations (mainly sanitation)** in Lahore (Punjab, Pakistan)

Goals:

- Fill critical support gaps for transitioning **from school to professional life.**
- Address socio-cultural pressures like **early marriage.**
- Contribute to joint UK-Pakistan **research on barriers to further education and alternative occupations** for low-caste, minority communities in **Pakistan and South Asia.**

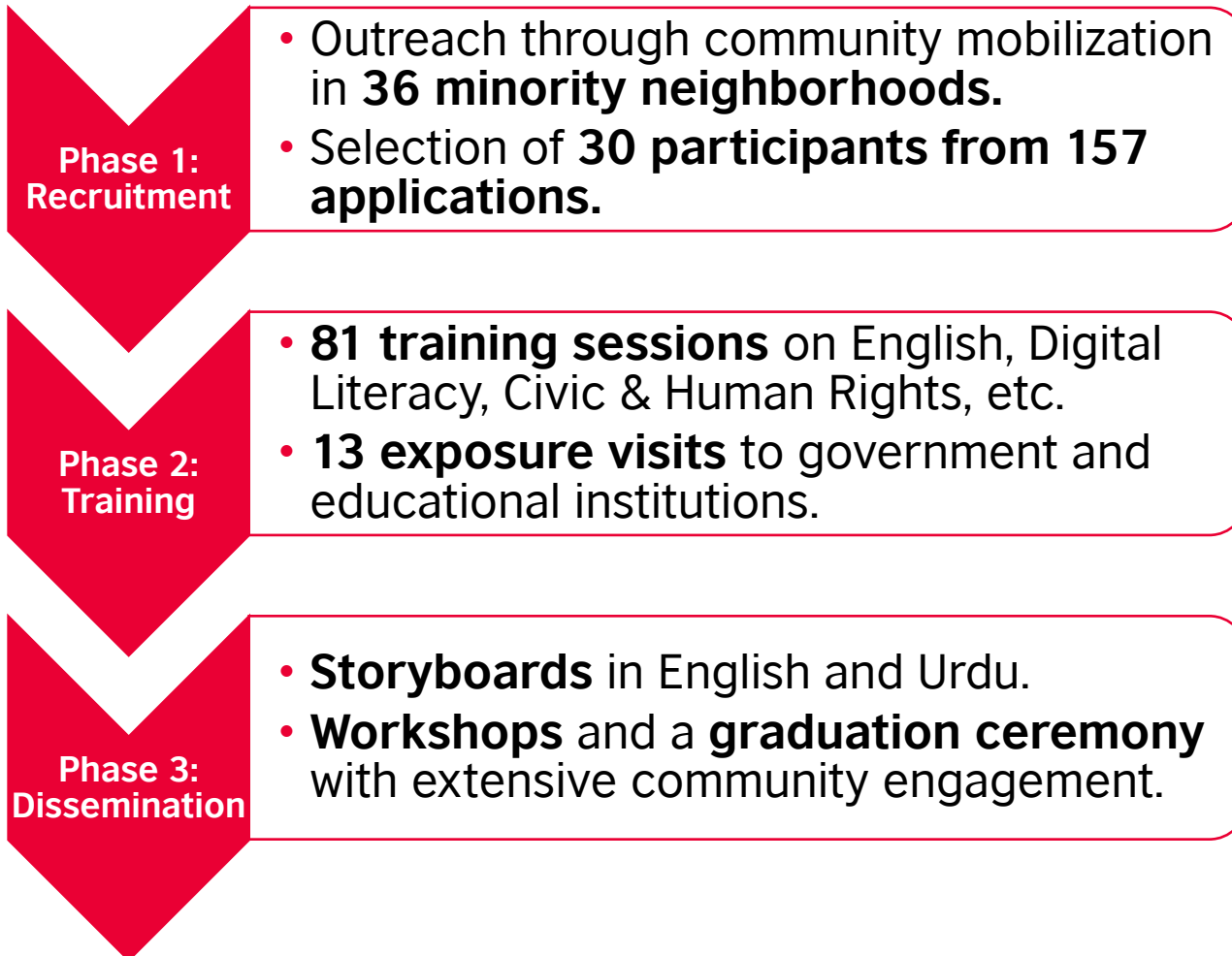
Project Implementation



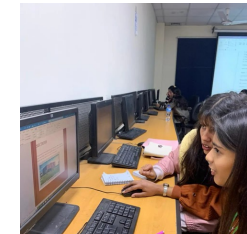
*Fellows during their Punjab Assembly
exposure visit*

Phases and Key Actions/Activities

Phases & Key Actions/Activities



Advertisement for outreach



Fellows in computer lab



Comic story of Christina

Impact and Successes



Fellow holding a placard during sports gala

Transforming Lives and Institutions

Transforming Lives and Institutions

Impact on Participants

- Enhanced access to higher education and skilled employment with at least **50% of participants** enrolling in **skilled development programs**; **30% committed to pursuing higher education** for better job prospects.
- **Twelve participants received scholarships under the Prime Minister's Youth Development Program.**
- **One participant** was selected for a fully-funded opportunity at the **World Youth Festival in Moscow, Russia.**



Fellow representing Pakistan in Russia

Impact on Lancaster

- Achieved substantial local, national, and global influence, engaging communities and policymakers, and **promoting research and activism across South Asia through a UK workshop.**



Workshop at Lancaster

Lessons and Challenges



Fellows studying in a library setting

Reflections: Lessons Learned and Challenges Faced

Reflections: Lessons Learned and Challenges Faced

- **Short time-frame** (more structured programme over longer duration, including further community engagement/outreach)
- **Differences** in educational levels, priorities and experiences across age groups
- **Expectations** among participants, parents and some guest speakers
- **Retention** – overall good, but six participants unable to continue
- **Sustainability** of outcomes – what next?



Fellows in a community outreach programme

Thank you!



Group photo of the fellows with dignitaries at the graduation ceremony