

Case Study - Andréa Brazil



Andréa Brazil

From a young age Andréa Brazil suffered a great deal of oppression and abuse when engaged in mainstream employment merely for having an effeminate demeanour. Until the age of 27 she still identified as a gay man. Andréa qualified as a management office assistant and also did a course in hair and makeup not only because she loved fashion but also because she was entrepreneurial.

“My main goal was to be in a position not to have to depend on formal employment that required me to be someone I was not”, she explains.

“I started my first beauty salon in the 2000s with the help of one of my girlfriends. This allowed me to live in my true identity; as Andréa Brazil, transvestite, hairdresser and businesswoman. I always endeavoured to reinvent myself and find other business projects. At the same time, I enjoyed teaching my skills to other LGBT and through my job I transformed the lives of some people. I taught hair and makeup techniques for nearly 9 years via

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Micro Rainbow International Foundation is a registered charity in England and Wales (no 1169868)

government-run projects and insisted that trans people could be professionals, teachers and anything we set our mind to as long as we were given the opportunity to do so – which rarely happened.”

Micro Rainbow Brazil - A game changer

After nearly 20 years working at her salon and also on a freelance basis, she sought to expand her knowledge on business management and came across the Micro Rainbow Brazil project. According to her *“it was a real game changer”*. In 2017 she signed up on the [4th LGBTI Entrepreneurship Course](#), where she had the opportunity to develop her line of clothing, **Andréa Brazil: Fashion Beyond Gender**, and organised a fashion show to present her first collection. She tells us what she learnt in the course in detail:

*“When I started the course, I was just a hairdresser. I had had my only business for nearly 17 years, struggling with stagnation and several periods of instability, without knowing where I was going wrong – hardly surviving with debt that spiralled out of control. **On the Micro Rainbow’s course I learnt to make my business more profitable with minimum expenses**, doing things such as going to clients’ homes or seeing clients at my home which allowed me to reduce overheads such as rent”*

*“At my salon I also sold clothes and accessories. I also bought the wrong supplies with pre-dated cheques, which increased my financial risk. **The course opened my eyes and empowered me to create my own fashion label and manufacture my own clothes. I learnt to do market research, to control stock, maximise capital, reinvest wisely using product and service filing systems. I improved my marketing and networking skills, pursued partnerships and expanded my business”**.*

From the beginning of the course she was keen to help other students and after the course ended, she was invited by the team to carry out interviews to [monitor the progress of the students](#) who took part in the project. She emotively recalls:

“I learnt so much with the stories of the 100 LGBTI people I interviewed, people who were looking for their place in the world. I became stronger both as a person and a professional. A desire to create a project specifically aimed at the most stigmatised and marginalised section of the population, to those people excluded from the employment market grew within me”

Owing to her excellent performance as an interviewer, the Micro Rainbow Brazil team invited her to be an assistant on their [5th course](#) in 2018. At the same time, she was chosen to study a foundation business course at UNISUAM, where she honed her skills and knowledge even more and came up with her dream social project: **Capacitrans**.

Capacitrans - training transvestites and transsexuals in Rio De Janeiro

With a view to securing financial resources to set up her project, Andréa applied for two funding applications. Less than a month later she received an e-mail summoning her to

take part at **Bank Itaú's More Diversity Program in Sao Paulo**. Hers was one of the **8 final candidates selected amongst more than 300 LGBT projects tendered**. She gives us more information about the inception of Capacitrans:

*"I now have the opportunity to fulfil my dream to have a social project for trans people run by a trans person, as this is very rare in the LGBTI+ movement in Brazil. We always find ourselves in the shadow of people who simply do not understand us. **This is what makes Capacitrans different: we are in charge of this project and we do not seek to exclude anyone like other sections of society exclude us**".*

*"We are running an **entrepreneurship** course with 10 students (in partnership with Grupo Pela Vidua who has facilitated office space). We are also running a **fashion** course with 6 trans and bisexual women and an **Image (Hair and Make Up)** course with 6 trans students and a gay student. Both take place in my workshop. I coordinate and teach with the assistance of volunteer teachers and **we aim to train around 40 students between now and December 2019**". We fund breakfast, lunch and transport expenses for our students as most of them live in very vulnerable circumstances".*

Andréa explains that Capacitrans has a range of aims such as **empowering trans people who have been marginalised in mainstream employment market**, inspiring civil society to create similar projects, encouraging the employment of trans professionals and finally, creating a cooperative company.

*"We received a partnership offer from the Parish of Sao Lucas, an Anglican-Catholic Church in Copacabana. We are working on a range of clerical clothing named "Transfiguration". **This, in fact, is a social enterprise**. We are hoping to invite students trained by Capacitrans Fashion to manufacture these goods and profit-share with us."*

She is also seeking ways to attract financial funding to obtain a large working space to be used both as a manufacturing workshop as well as a temporary shelter:

*"I would like to create a space where students could receive training and be temporarily accommodated. **The idea is to allow them to grow and spread their wings and fly as high as they possibly can. I hope to be able to contribute to increasing the life expectancy of trans people, which at present is 30 years. This can only be done challenging stigma and the belief that we can only find employment as sex workers on the street and in street corners. We want to show the world that we can be anything we want, even businesswomen**".*

In 2019, Andréa was invited once again to be a trainer for the **6th entrepreneurship course** run by Micro Rainbow Brazil. She also took part in a crowdfunding campaign organised by the **All Out** NGO in partnership with Micro Rainbow International

Foundation. With all the funds raised by this campaign, she is hoping to buy industrial sewing machines, overlocks, collaret machines and other materials for her company **Andréa Brazil, Fashion Beyond Gender**. She is currently planning on hiring professionals trained by Capacitrans Image to provide services in hairdressing, make up, textile manufacturing and image consultancy all over Rio de Janeiro.

To find out more about Capacitrans visit:

