



Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) Programme



SUCCESS In-country Exposure Visit to Swat-SRSP



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July 18-22, 2016

Acknowledgment

RSPN would like to express sincere gratitude and thanks to SRSP teams for facilitating the RSPN team and our guests for the exposure visit in Swat and Dir. Due to the landslide and last minute change of plans, the original itinerary for Chitral had to be cancelled, and the SRSP teams stepped up and accommodated us in an exceptional manner.

We are very thankful for the planning, effort and time spent by all focal persons and their unparalleled hospitality to make this trip for our partners from Sindh an enjoyable and truly enriching experience by visiting several COs/VOs/LSOs, and experiencing the work they have done with an opportunity to ask questions and learn lessons, especially in regard to the EU Programmes being implemented by SRSP in both districts.

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Overview

As part of the Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme (SUCCESS), Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) component, an in-country exposure and learning visit was planned for the SUCCESS Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) to see the work of other RSPs. The visit team included staff members from the SUCCESS Programme partners: National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), Thardeep Rural Support Programme (TRDP), and RSPN, , representatives of District Administration Sujawal and one local community representative from district Dadu.

The exposure visit was initially planned to the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) and the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) programme area in Chitral district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. The team left for the visit on July 18, 2016. However, due to unforeseen closure of the Lowari Pass, the original plan had to be cancelled and was changed to Swat, KP, where SRSP is undertaking work in social mobilisation. The SRSP teams gave a very warm welcome and accommodated the participants at a short notice.

This exposure visit allowed the participants to directly observe the work and learn from the experiences of SRSP in social mobilisation, and learn from active leaders of community institutions. The visiting government officials were able to understand the benefits of sustained government support to social mobilisation. The participants, especially those from the Government of Sindh were extremely impressed by the RSP approach and the work and efforts RSPs are undertaking for the economic and social empowerment of the poor.

Proceeding of the Visit

Day 1 – 19th July, 2016

Visit to SRSP – Dir, KP

On the first day, the participants were warmly welcomed by the SRSP staff in Dir. The first session was at SRSP regional office in Dir where Mr Noor Ajab, Regional Programme Manager, SRSP-Dir and Mr Fayaz Ahmad Noor, Regional PMER Officer SRSP-Dir gave a brief introduction of the organisation and presented on their EU-funded Programme for Economic Advancement and Community Empowerment (PEACE).

The PEACE Programme is a four-year long project (2012-2016) being implemented in the seven districts of Malakand Division (Swat, Upper and Lower Dir, Shangla, Malakand, Buner and Chitral) with the financial assistance of European Union. It covers 100 Union Councils of the seven districts and is expected to reach 2.7 million people. The PEACE and the SUCCESS Programmes have many similarities since they are both based on the RSPs' social mobilisation approach economic and social empowerment of the rural poor.:

- Social mobilization for fostering Community Institutions and Networking
- Community Physical Infrastructure Schemes (CPIs)
- Women's Empowerment
- Economic Growth

Given the specific potential of the PEACE Programme districts, SRSP is also working with organized community institutions for the establishment of Micro Hydro Projects (MHPs).



SRSP presentation on PEACE Programme, in SRSP Office in Upper Dir, KP

The presentation was followed by a question and answer session, in which the participants asked various questions about the social mobilisation process, drawing parallels between the goals of PEACE Programme and SUCCESS Programme. The participants congratulated SRSP for undertaking the PEACE Programme in an area which has suffered severely from recent upheavals and natural calamities, and in involving and empowering rural women.

LSO – Upper Dir, KP

The presentation was followed by a visit to one of the Local Support Organisations (LSO) fostered by SRSP in Upper Dir under the PEACE Programme. The LSO, Dir Development Programme (DDP), was formed in October 2015. The General Secretary, Mr Gul Ahmed, gave an overview of the LSO. DDP is a mixed LSO with 6 female members in the General Body, and 2 in the Executive Body. The LSO has no paid staff, but only volunteers who take time out from their busy lives for LSO meetings. The vision of LSO is “to see the society in which there is social justice, equality, equity, peace, development and prosperity.” They are working towards achieving this vision, through their mission “to develop positive change agents for bringing an impact by promoting violence-free and gender discrimination-free society, facilitating the desired objectives of providing better livelihood opportunities.”



Mr Gul Ahmed, General Secretary of LSO Dir Development Programme (DDP)

Mr Ahmed told the participants that the LSO has so far formed 12 COs, and 4 VOAs, and have Rs. 770,000 in savings. He also shared the Union Council Development Plan (UCDP) formed by the LSO.



Participants in a meeting with members of LSO DDP

The participants asked various questions from the LSO leaders including the major challenges they have faced so far in forming and operating the organisation, and if there were any issues in procurement. The learning from the LSO was that to form a team and then manage it has been the biggest challenge. As all people working for the LSO are volunteers, it is difficult for them to leave their jobs and convene for the meetings. However, Mr. Ahmed said that the people realised the fact that no external agency can rid them of their problems if they did not take an action themselves and stopped expecting the outsiders to solve all their problems.

The visit to LSO was followed by a visit to a micro-hydro power (MHP) project of Sia Barikot and a meeting with a CO. The cultural dynamics of the community did not allow the female team members to attend the CO meeting.

The CO members briefed the participants about the MHP of Sia Barikot, which is located in the Dobando valley UC Qulandi. Population of the said village is 120 households and is at a distance of 11 km from Dir town. The total cost of the said MHP is Rs. 5,134,610 (donor-share is Rs. 4,448,018 and community-share is Rs. 686,592). The MHP generates a power of 35Kv, serving 120 households of the village. Every house pays Rs.150/- a month for maintenance and operator's salary.



Participants in a meeting with CO of Sia Barikot

MHP is a cost-effective energy solution, which is both an efficient, reliable and renewable form of energy. It only takes a small amount of flow (as little as two gallons per minute) or a drop as low as two feet to generate electricity with micro hydro. Electricity can be delivered as far as a mile away to the location where it is being used. It produces a continuous supply of electrical energy in comparison to other small-scale renewable technologies. MHP is considered to function as a 'run-of-river' system, meaning that the water passing through the generator is directed back into the stream with relatively little impact on the surrounding ecology. The MHP in Sia Barikot has provided the residents with a continuous flow of electricity, and the electricity is not only used for cooking and lighting, but the women also use electric machines for different purposes.

The SRSP MHP schemes have made a significant contribution in providing renewable, clean and sustainable energy to the local population in the PEACE Programme areas, which has reduced usage of fuel wood and kerosene.

Day 2 – 20th July, 2016

Visit to SRSP – Swat District, KP

On day 2 the participants travelled to Swat, KP, which is another district for SRSP's PEACE Programme. The first session was at SRSP's district office, where the District Manager, Mr Ijaz Ali, presented on the achievements under PEACE Programme in Swat district.



Mr Ijaz Ali, Manager for PEACE Project, SRSP presenting on the PEACE Project

Answering questions from the participants, Mr Ijaz emphasised the importance of the social mobilisation approach and forming LSOs. He claimed “third tier is the fruit and harvest of social mobilisation.”

Mr Ijaz explained that even within the Malakand division, UCs have contextual differences. In Malakand for instance, most of the men are out of country, so the households are headed by women. Therefore, the COs/VOs/LSOs are mostly women centred. However, in Swat the case is different, and there were challenges in involving women in the social mobilisation process. SRSP altered the methods of carrying out social mobilisation, focusing on cultural and contextual realities. Firstly, the CMST was changed from three-day training to one-day training as people live really far on the mountains and find it difficult to travel every day for three days to attend the training. However, the course of the trainings was intensified. Similarly, in the LMST

(5-day long training) members of the General Body of the LSO were also included in addition to the Executive Body members.

Mr Ijaz believed that “Trainings are imperative; they change the mind-set of the people.” Thus, they focused on training people, including Community Resource Persons (CRPs) who “are the backbone of the project.” CRPs (activists both from existing male and female COs) are identified and trained as front line volunteers for forming new Community Organizations. The CRPs who then become master trainers have been very successful in carrying out further trainings. The CRPs, Mr Ijaz found, were those who wanted to help and were of an altruistic nature. As compared to the Social Organisers, they were more enthusiastic.

His advice for the participating RSPs was to engage CRPs more as they are the locals who know the language, geography of the area, existing conflicts, and were trusted by the locals. The CRPs as activists can live and move around the area at much lower cost. Plus, as credible locals, they can much more easily convince and motivate others in the community. SRSP also started organising a monthly Progress Planning Meeting for the CRPs to keep them accountable by providing updates on their tasks, and advised the participating RSPs to do the same.

LSO – Malam Jabba, Swat District, KP

The next session was a meeting with one LSO in Malam Jabba, in Union Council Kishora, District Swat, formed under the PEACE Programme . The LSO, Malam Jabba Development Organisation (MDO), was formed in February 2014. The General Secretary gave a brief presentation on the profile of the LSO, and shared the initiatives by SRSP, Community Driven Local Development (CDLD), local government and the self-help initiatives that the LSO has undertaken.

The LSO has two females in the Executive Body, of which one is a Health Secretary. The LSO is working towards achieving various objectives, including increasing the number of children



Participants in a meeting with LSO MDO

enrolled in schools, health awareness campaigns, provision of clean drinking water, hygiene awareness campaigns, conflict resolution, and promotion of tourism in Malam Jabba. MDO has arranged ski tournaments to promote sports, physical activity, and build camaraderie between the people of the village.

The LSO believes that the most important focus area for development is education. As one member of the LSO proclaimed, “Our only asset is education, and we should focus on educating our children, as they are the future.”

Day 3 – 21st July, 2016

LSO – Shangla, Swat District, KP

On third day the participants travelled to Shangla, UC Alporai, to meet with a LSO, Organisation for Social Development (OSD). OSD was formed in May, 2010 and has been operational since 6 years. It has thirteen Executive Body members: 11 males, and 2 females. The General Secretary of the LSO gave a brief presentation on the LSO, outlining its achievements and future plans.

OSD has been involved in various activities including CPI schemes such as rehabilitation of: drinking water supply pipe, link road, and electricity. In addition to these, OSD has so far established a skills centre for men (teaching skills such as basics in computers, electrician work, and plumbing), established a youth centre, partnered with Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) on establishing a Naukri ya Karobar (NyK) centre that connects potential employees with employers, developed a conflict resolution committee, has established a skills and production centre for women called Kiran Production Centre, and has carried out activities for tree plantation. Kiran Production Centre allows women from the village, who have enrolled in the centre, to learn as well as produce different crafts, including clothes and bags, which are then sold.



Participants in a meeting with LSO OSD

The presentation on LSO was followed by a presentation on NyK's profile and achievements by its President. NyK centres are Union Council based institutional setups that will facilitate youth of the area to either find jobs or set-up their own businesses. The NyK centres were established in 2014, and are all over country with 76 centres in all four provinces, established by PPAF.

After the meeting with OSD, the participants were taken to visit a suspension bridge that was built by OSD under the PEACE Programme funded by EU, and implemented by SRSP.



Participants visiting the Suspension Bridge built by OSD

LSO Findings and Lessons Learnt

During the meetings with LSO, the members discussed with the participants the challenges they have faced in formation and functioning of the LSO, as well as the positive contribution of the LSO to the community.

Challenges:

- Political interference
- Social and gender-related issues
- Security issues
- Geographical/topographical issues
- Natural disasters

Positive Results:

- Conflict Resolution
- Infrastructure projects
- Linkages with private and governmental officials to get their support
- Awareness creating for the community
- Education and health campaign
- Environmental campaigns
- Establishment of youth centres
- Supporting VOs and COs

The LSOs aim at providing the community with an interface to effectively carry out the development initiatives on a permanent basis by supporting member COs and VOs. The support that LSOs provide to the community is tremendous, be it through acting as intermediaries between two parties for conflict resolution, lobbying for government support for public service provision, or building linkages with the private sector, donors, or other NGOs.

The institutional sustainability of the LSOs is linked with the increased ownership and participation of youth in these community institutions; mobilisation of local human, physical and financial resources, and developing and retaining committed activists and young professionals to lead these institutions with professionalism, financial prudence; and providing demand-led services to primary target groups, and finally, continuing education support programme to guide, train and act as 'knowledge catalyst'. The key role of LSOs, however, is to support member COs and VOs so that they remain active.

Remarks by Participants

At the end of the visit, the participants were deeply thankful to the SRSP staff, and the RSPN staff for arranging the exposure visit. Mr Syed Attaullah Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Sujawal, remarked that he was extremely grateful to be invited to the visit, as he got to witness the remarkable work that RSPs are doing for the rural people by mobilising them. He said that the linkages between government and RSPs are extremely important and crucial for scaling up CDD approach throughout the country.

Mr Sajjad Qadri, Assistant Commissioner, Sujawal, said, "I'm deeply impressed by SRSP and RSPs' general network. The coordination between the RSPs is noteworthy, and the way situation was handled, and we were accommodated at such short notice was absolutely fantastic." Talking about social mobilisation, Mr Qadri also said, "The work that AKRSP and SRSP has done and is doing in KP/Gilgit Baltistan is beyond remarkable. This visit is a great opportunity for us all to learn from SRSP's work." The partner RSP staff also gave a vote of thanks to the RSPN staff and SRSP staff for their cooperation and arrangement of the exposure visit, which they found extremely useful, and they are now even more confident that will that the SUCCESS Programme will contribute significantly for the economic and social empowerment of the rural poor in Sindh.

Annex I - List of Participants

S.#	Name	Designation	Organisation
1.	Mr Syed Attaullah Shah,	Additional Deputy Commissioner, Sujawal	GoS
2.	Mr Sajjad Qadri,	Assistant Commissioner, Sujawal	GoS
3.	Mr. Imam Ali Detho	District Manager Larkana	SRSO
4.	Mr. Asad Ali Jatoi	District Manager Qambar	SRSO
5.	Shafique Ahmed Chandio	Sr Programme Officer HYD	NRSP
6.	Muhammad Yousuf Khoso	District Programme Officer	NRSP
7.	Samad Phulpoto	Coordinator HRD	TRDP
8.	Khimchand Sanjo	PO Documentation and Communication	TRDP
9.	Nazeer Ahmed Bhand	Community member, Dadu	TRDP
10.	Asad Khan	Admin and Procurement Officer, SUCCESS	RSPN
11.	Filza Nasir	Documentation and Reporting Officer, SUCCESS	RSPN
12.	Marvi Ahmed	M&E Officer, SUCCESS	RSPN

SUCCESS Programme is based on the Rural Support Programmes' (RSPs) social mobilisation approach to Community-Driven Development (CDD). Social Mobilisation centers around the belief that poor people have an innate potential to help themselves; that they can better manage their limited resources if they organise and are provided technical and financial support. The RSPs under the SUCCESS Programme provide social guidance, as well as technical and financial assistance to the rural poor in Sindh.

SUCCESS is a six-year long (2015-2021) programme funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), and Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) in eight districts of Sindh, namely: Kambar Shahdadkot, Larkana, Dadu, Jamshoro, Matiari, Sujawal, Tando Allahyar, and Tando Muhammad Khan.



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