



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



National Convention of LSOs 2017



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National Convention of LSOs 2017

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Organised by:
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Overview

To promote the significant contributions of Local Support Organisations (LSOs) in stimulating the community-driven approach to sustainability across Pakistan, and to establish and strengthen mechanisms of sharing of experiences and knowledge between community groups at national and international level, a broad spectrum of stakeholders were invited to attend the National Convention of Local Support Organisations (LSOs) 2017 organised by the Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN) in Islamabad, on September 15th, 2017. In order to accentuate the co-relation of RSPs' work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the theme for this year's convention was "Achieving SDGs by Empowering Communities".

The achievements of community institutions were shared with the policy makers, donor agencies, government representatives, international and national NGOs, media, and over 100 LSO representatives from all the provinces and regions of the country contributing to a diverse group of more than 300 participants. The notable participation included Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission of Pakistan who was the Chief Guest of the convention, Ms. Marvi Memon MNA and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), His Excellency, Mr. Jean-François Cautain, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Mr. Paul Dudley Martin, Senior Adviser on SDGs to UN Resident Coordinator and Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman RSPN.

The convention shed light on the accomplishments of LSOs in terms of their contribution in achieving the SDGs. 12 LSOs were selected from all over the country to present on their achievements. They reflected on their work on cross-cutting issues ranging from poverty reduction, gender equality, social integration, health, population, employment and education to human rights, the environment and sustainable development. The panelists at the convention convened to advocate ways of harnessing the growth and capacity building of the community institutions. Furthermore, they underscored the importance of generating political will to put prudent policies into action to improve sustainability and adaptive capacity to ensure poverty reduction at the household level.

Proceedings of the workshop

Welcome Note and Introduction of Participants

The sessions commenced with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran by a community member, Mr. Ghulam Mustafa. This was followed by an introduction of the participants initiated by the moderator of the convention, Ms. Filza Nasir, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, SUCCESS-RSPN.

Once all the participants briefly introduced themselves, Mr. Khaleel Ahmed Tetlay, Chief Operating Officer, RSPN welcomed all participants and shed light on the significance of such an event. He acknowledged and applauded the competent mechanism incorporated by the LSOs to tackle with dynamic and prevailing issues of the community members. Furthermore, he conversed about the change that social mobilisation has brought about and that over 409,883 Community Organisations (COs), representing 7,026,550 organised households, have been established so far. He also said that while Pakistan has 3,942 rural Union Councils, RSPs have fostered 1,457 LSOs.

Session I: How to achieve SDGs by involving Communities

Ms. Filza Nasir briefly illustrated the agenda of the convention and the significance of sharing the work of LSOs at this forum. The entire session primarily highlighted the work and progression of LSOs in tackling the multi-dimensional SDGs.

The panelists for the session included Mr. Sartaj Aziz (Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission of Pakistan), Marvi Memon, MNA and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), His Excellency, Mr. Jean-François Cautain, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Paul Dudley Martin, Senior Adviser on SDGs to UN Resident Coordinator and Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman, RSPN.

Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan formally welcomed the participants and introduced the National Convention of LSOs followed by briefing them on the work and core mandate of RSPs. He said that the RSPs function on the assumption that even the poorest of the poor has the potential of improving their livelihood. While sharing the journey of his work on ‘Social Mobilisation Strategy’, he shared the secret to the success of these initiative. According to him, *“the success of RSPs is dependent on the willingness of the rural poor to get organised.”*

He accredited his work to his mentor Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan from whom he learned the process approach and defined it as the principles as precise as “the law of gravity and going against these principles is like building crooked walls”. Mr. Sultan concluded his address on briefing the participants on the reach of this approach and how it touches the livelihood of approximately 200 million rural people in Pakistan and India. He appreciated the work of all the people associated with the RSPs and the presence of over 200 activist leaders attending this conference.



Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman RSPN

The introductory note was followed by presentation by

Mr. Rashid Bajwa, CEO NRSP, on the ways the RSPs are assisting in achieving SDGs. In his presentation Mr. Bajwa highlighted all the different ventures/interventions by NRSP as well as other RSPs that correspond to almost all of the SDGs. For instance, the SDG 1 – No Poverty is directly linked with the RSPs core vision and approach. The main objective of the work RSPs do is to alleviate poverty in the country and bring poor people out of the poverty trap. Similarly, through various interventions the RSPs are working towards providing quality education, health facilities, as well as water and sanitation to the community members. All of the efforts thus contribute towards the SDGs.



Mr Rashid Bajwa, CEO NRSP, presenting on the ways RSPs are contributing towards SDGs

The presentation was followed by LSO presentations. Each LSO representative summarised their work on the main SDG they have been working on, and the projects that have been undertaken and their future plans.

Ms. Naseem, Chairperson LSO Awaza, District Shikarpur, Sindh (Sindh Rural Support Organisation-SRSO) was the first presenter of the session. She highlighted the work of the LSO in regards to SDG 1, ‘ending poverty’. To help the deprived community members from her LSO, several poverty reduction programs such as the formation of business development groups, kitchen gardening, handicraft production have been initiated in the village. To this date, PKR 1.2 Million has been earned by these poor female artisans through the sale of hand-embroidered fabric.

Rukhsana Sarki, Chairperson LSO Itihad, District Jacobabad, Sindh (SRSO) was the second presenter who shared her work on SDG 1 and formation of business development groups in her LSO. Her presentation was followed by Mehwish Rasheed, Member Ex. Body,

LSO Jhand Mehlu, District Gujar Khan, Punjab (National Rural Support Programme-NRSP). Series of health and environmental campaigns have been incorporated by her LSO to achieve SGD 3-



Rukhsana Sarki, Chairperson Lso Itihad, Sindh (SRSO)

‘Good Health and Well-being of the community’. Surveys for monitoring safe drinking water and enrollment of out-of-school children are among some of the initiatives taken by the LSO as a step forward to achieve SDG 6-Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 4-Quality Education.

Several other LSO members presented their work. This included Arshad Iqbal, President LSO Human Development Organisation, District Shangla, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Sarhad Rural Support Programme-SRSP), Abdullah Jan, President LSO Karwan, Balochistan (Balochistan Rural Support Programme-BRSP) and Sher Muhammad, Manager LSO Kasan Shigari Khord, District Baltistan, Gilgit Baltistan (Aga Khan Rural Support Programme- AKRSP). They shared their work on SDG 7: Affordable Clean Energy, SDG 3: (Health), SDG 4: (Education), SDG 8: (Economic Growth & SDG 9:



His Excellency, Jean-Francois Cautain, Ambassador of the EU to Pakistan

(Infrastructure Development) respectively.

The LSO presentations under session one came to an end, on this note the panelist not only commended the work of LSOs but also gave an instructive insight on exploring an array of possibilities to strengthen the framework of social mobilisation.

Remarks by Esteemed Guests

His Excellency, Mr. Jean-François Cautain, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan expressed his pleasure to be present at the convention. He stated that the 2030 agenda for attaining SDGs taken on by the UN in September 2015 is the international community’s retort to global challenges. The trends regarding sustainable development and the advancement from the MDGs to the SDGs is mirrored through the change in approach to global development.

Furthermore, he said that the EU is a leading support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Pakistan. Mr. Jean-François expressed,

“We believe that sustainable development can only happen if communities at community level are taking charge of their own development, because only strong and well organised communities can demand quality services from the government and make officials accountable.” He said that the work being done by RSPs is harnessing the potential of people. In this regard, he shared that, *“In the last two years, I have been visiting the rural communities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan. I have witnessed that the RSPs*



Mr. Paul Dudley, Senior Adviser on SDGs to UN Resident Coordinator

work has unleashed the potentials of communities to undertake development initiatives impacting their lives.”

After this, Mr. Paul Dudley, Senior Adviser on SDGs to UN Resident Coordinator, in his speech focused on the United Nation Development Programme’s strategy for SDGs. He said that the UN’s support to countries in case of attaining the SDGS will accentuate the basic element that includes stronger institutions, more resilient societies, and the specific but connected objectives included in the 2030 Agenda and the specific SDGs.

He said, *“Pakistan’s experience with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) served as a lesson well learnt. Pakistan was a slow starter to initiate implementation of MDGs and, as a result, missed most of the MDG targets. One of the core lessons learned from the MDGs was the lack of ownership of MDGs at the provincial and district levels.”* However, in case of SDGs, Paul believed, *“No country will achieve SDGs by itself; mobilisation of resources at local level is indispensable for it.”* He said that Pakistan has been an early starter to initiate work on SDGs and the Government of Pakistan determination to achieve the SDGs is apparent. He informed that the UN in Pakistan stands united together in supporting the Government of Pakistan to achieve the SDG goals. He also said that it was heartening to see how LSOs are linking their outputs and outcomes with. He further underscored that the capacity building and social mobilisation at local level will be highly useful for achieving SDGs.



Ms Marvi Memon, Chairperson BISP

He concluded on praising the work of RSPN and thanked RSPN for instigating such wonderful effort to bring together a wide array of stakeholders for a serious dialogue on the role of communities and local organizations in achieving the SDG agenda.

Ms. Marvi Memon, MNA and Chairperson, BISP, was the next to address the participants. Ms. Memon expressed that it was an absolute privilege to be present at LSO Convention. She applauded the work of two gurus Mr. Sartaj Aziz and Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan. Moreover, Ms. Marvi believed that SDGs are now a household level concept. She appreciated the work of LSOs and expressed her happiness over their achievements. She said that this network is based on the principle of empowerment and communities’, particularly for women, financial inclusion is the key to sustainable development.

As the Chief Guest of the convention, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission of Pakistan, was called upon stage to share his valuable thoughts. Mr. Aziz viewed that SDGs can be achieved through mutual efforts. For this, he said, *“It is very important to translate the national goals into provincial goals and then to local goals. If we will be able to do this, this will be an exemplary contribution for other nations.”* He further said that, given the capacity constraints in the local governments, massive efforts are required from LSOs to strengthen service delivery of the local governments. Moreover, he said that the lessons learnt from MDGs must be applied in future.

He expressed that this national convention of LSOs offers a distinctive occasion for LSOs to make their voice heard, to endorse the significance of localization of the new targets, and to position local government as a key partner in the implementation of SDGs.

Session II: Community Institutions' (COs/VOs/LSOs) role in promoting Gender Equality, Employment, and Environment

This session accentuated how the community institutions have contributed to the SDGs related to Gender Equality, Employment, and Environment. The LSO members of Punjab and Sindh shared their stories from the field on achieving SDGs in their respective villages.

Khalida Parveen, General Secretary LSO Inqlab, District Narowal, Punjab (Punjab Rural Support Programme-PRSP) presented their work on SDG 6- Clean water and sanitation. Introduction of proper drainage systems and gas stoves are among some of the initiatives taken by the LSO. Khalida gave a pictorial presentation of these projects which reflected the efforts of COs in achieving SDGs in terms of working opportunities and economic growth, unskilled labor being provided with an array of trainings to improvise skill sets.

Zahida Parveen, President LSO Khushali, District Jamshoro, Sindh (Thardeep Rural Development Programme - TRDP) shared how they have arranged the free supply of safe water for drinking water from E&I Company. The other projects undertaken by her LSO included enrollment of out-of-school, skill training, and setting up of medical camps for treatment of diseases for the villagers.

Documentary Screening: Tahafuz- SDG 13

The session was concluded by streaming of a video documentary prepared by Tahafuz project, addressing SDG 13 – Climate Action. Tahafuz project is a USAID funded community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) project, which aims at enhancing capacity of the rural communities in 232 revenue villages from selected twenty union councils of the most disaster prone districts including Thatta, Badin, Tharparkar and Umerkot of the Sindh province. The project benefited an estimated 2,044,791 men, women and children involving 350,736 households.

They summarized the initiatives that have been taken by RSPs towards achieving SDG 13-Climate Action. The documentary reflected the CBDRM related interventions taken under Tahafuz project and how they have impacted the lives of the disaster struck people. The community members were mobilised on associated risk and



Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission of Pakistan



Khalida Parveen, General Secretary Lso Inqlab, PRSP

possible ways to cope up with climatic emergencies. The video showed that the project was successful in bridging gaps between the Government and the local community. These linkages between the two main stakeholders have played a crucial role in tailoring remedial measures that make the precautionary strategies more resilient.

Session III: How are the Community Institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs) building partnerships with Government and other Stakeholders for SDGs

The Moderator, Ms. Humera, Project Manager, FOSI-Education, shared the objective of the last session, which was to recognise the significance of building relationships between the community institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs) and Government or other Stakeholders for SDGs. Through this session, the LSOs of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh presented their work. In addition to this, a theatre performance was given which encapsulated the essence of RSPs and LSOs work towards achieving SDGs.

Theatre Performance on SDGs: Mercury Transformation

To deliver the true sense of deprivations that exist in our communities an eloquent theatre performance was staged by a team of actors from Mercury Transformation. The actors ravishingly conveyed that how socio-economic deprivations deeply effect the mental and physical well-being of the individuals. While depicting the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of these individuals, the performance gave the message that one has the potential to carve his/her way out of the darkness. In practice, this way has been carved for societies with the formation of LSOs all around Pakistan. It shed light on the work of LSOs as a collective effort to achieve these SDGs and work towards mental, physical, social and economic well-being of the community members.

LSO Presentations

After the moving theatre performance, four different LSO representatives presented their work on various SDGs in their community. Khnghar Singh, Chairman LSO Sarang, District Tharparkar, Sindh (TRDP) presented the work of his LSO on “Extended Programme for Immunisation” (SDG 3 - Good health and well-being). Under this initiative, 3,497 children and 2,105 pregnant women were registered and vaccinated and 1,985 patients benefited from the free medical camps that were organised at six cluster villages. Moreover, as a result of their



Theatre Performance: Mercury Transformations

contributions, today in their region all of the EPI centres are functional, where vaccinator and Lady Health Workers (LHWs) visit regularly.

A representative of Misri Chaniho, Manager Operations, Sindh Graduate Association, Sindh presented on “Public Private Partnership for Education (SDG 4 – Quality Education and SDG 17 – Partnership for the goals). Furthermore, presentations by Muhammad Inam Khan, Press Secretary LSO Fatehpur, District Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (SRSP) and Shakeel Ahmed, General Secretary, LSO Dakhnair, District Attock, Punjab (Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara- GBTI) on SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the goals were delivered respectively. These presentations gave an overview of the lessons learned under the programme including significant contributions to improving the lives of rural poor. After the presentations, the moderator, Ms. Humera opened the floor for question/ answer session.

Open Discussion and Q&A Session:

In the outset of this session, one of the participants praised Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan for his commendable efforts followed by asking that how LSOs are focusing on working in urban areas in terms of SDGs. Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan responded by highlighting the difference between the nature of prevailing issues in rural and urban communities hence the model of RSPs can be effectively applied for urban communities.

Mr. Ghulam Khero, Programme Coordinator, SUCCESS shared that during his field visits he found out that the reason for less coverage are: migration; law and order situation; non-response, etc. He instigated the LSOs to explore the factors responsible for less coverage. Mr. Fazal Saadi, Programme Manager, SUCCESS responded that the reasons outlined above for less coverage are for surveys rather than the households organised in case of SUCCESS.

Mr. Zahid Iqbal (participant) expressed his gratitude to RSPN and NRSP for intensively sharing the field experiences furthermore he commended the work of LSOs at the union council level. Mr. Chaudhry Qudrat (participant) stressed on the dire need to work on both individual capacity and financial capacity along with the effective usage of resources in order to achieve the SDGs.

One of the participants added that LSOs are similar to a continuous process and strong linkages between community and LSOs is significant. He also said that self-help is the main ingredient for development of the community. He further inquired on the nature of RSPs linkages with the private sector. Mr. Khaleel Ahmed Tetlay (COO, RSPN) responded to this by saying that RSPs take on building a network with the private sector is through the prism of LSOs. Various initiative such as business development groups are paving their way to build a relationship with the private sector.



Mr Ghulam Sarwar Khero, Programme Coordinator, SUCCESS-RSPN

Ms. Rukhsana (SRSO) appreciated the work of RSPs. She said, *“We have witnessed a visible change in the communities; especially in terms of women empowerment through various initiatives. This was very much needed for our successful future.”*

Mr. Tariq Chaudhry (LSO Chargh) shared that initially when they started working in their community, it was very challenging as the community members had low acceptability level however, with the passage of time the situation has evolved contributing to a progressive change in terms of schools being built and women empowerment.

Moreover, Ms. Farah Ahmed (Quaid-I- Azam Univerity) suggested involving students in the trainings delivered at the community level. She also said that the RSPs can also utilise and benefit from research studies undertaken by students from across Pakistan. Mr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri (Executive Director, SDPI) said that the approach of development focuses on bottom up and without involving the local communities’ development cannot take place.



Ms Rukhsana, SRSO



Ms. Farah Ahmed, Quaid-I- Azam Univerity

After the discussion, a shield-distribution ceremony was held where the notable guests handed shields to the representatives of LSOs who had presented at the Convention.

To conclude the LSO Convention 2017, Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan gave vote of thanks. Mr. Khan thanked the donors and the government representatives for participating actively in the Convention and providing valuable input in the ways SDGs can be attained. Furthermore, he acknowledged the contributions of the representatives from provincial governments, and thanked them for taking interest in contributing to and collaborating with RSPs in achieving the SDGs. He also thanked the community members who had come from all over the country for their participation and appreciated them for the work their community institutions are doing in their respective districts.



Award Distribution Ceremony

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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