



Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme

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2018

# Chitral Exposure Visit Report



Chitral, Pakistan

July 10 – 15, 2018



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## **OVERVIEW**

This report documents the proceedings, reflections and feedback of the learning and exposure visit to Chitral under the European Union funded Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme (SUCCESS). Chitral was chosen to be a place of learning and exposure because of its experience of working with the community institutions fostered by Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and Sarhad Rural Support Programme for nearly three decades. The visit triggered reflective thinking and questions among the participants. During and after the visits, the participants shared their immediate and long-term take away to improve their work. Such reflections and take away were noted by the author and shared in this report. The delegation comprised of officials and community persons from the Government of Sindh and members of SUCCESS team from the implementing organisations- TRDP, SRSO, NRSP and RSPN. The visit was arranged by RSPN.

## DAY ONE – JULY 10, 2018

The participants were on board at 730am in the morning and began their journey to Chitral by road. Dr Abdur Rehman Cheema led the group and had an introduction and briefing session at Takht Bahi, Madan where participants had traditional kebabs, naans and chai. Dr Abdur Rehman Cheema briefed participants about the aim of the visit and invited them to observe the work of community institutions, relate the work of the community institutions of Chitral with that of our own work back in Sindh and finally, reflect on the immediate and long-term steps and plans to improve their work with communities. The participants

were explained the significance and opportunity to observe the work of community institutions of Chitral as these happen to be the oldest, over two decades, in this area established by Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and Sarhad Rural Support Programme.

Dr Cheema briefed the participants to be careful while taking photographs with men and women of the area to respect their privacy and seek explicit consent. The participants had a stopover at Upper Dir for lunch and tea and reached Chitral at night at 1130pm.



## DAY TWO – JULY 11, 2018

The day started with a welcome and briefing session by Mr Sardar Ayub, Regional General Manager Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) and other colleagues at the AKRSP Chitral office at 10 am. Mr Ghulam Sarwar Khero, Programme Coordinator SUCCESS, RSPN introduced the participants and about the aims of this learning and exposure visit. Mr Sardar Ayub told about the history of the working of AKRSP, the mother RSP, that was established in 1983, one after establishing itself in Gilgit. AKRSP was initiated to help double the income the local people and to develop a replicable model of community-driven local development. It set up village organisations and mobilised communities to save. In the 1990s, the AKRSP Chitral focussed on setting up micro-hydro stations to address the energy needs of off-grid communities. Over time, the AKRSP Chitral has worked in institutional development, natural resource management, renewable energy, and infrastructure, women and market development areas. Among the major challenges of working in this area is insufficient infrastructure as valley roads remain in poor conditions.

After having a briefing session with AKRSP Chitral, the participants were taken to meet with representatives of Garam Chashma Area Development Organisation (GADO) located at about 1.5 hours from Chitral. Mr Islahuddin, Manager GADO and others briefed participants that GADO was set up in 1999 as a registered organisation with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) under section 5 of the Companies Ordinance 1984. Although GADO was established by AKRSP, it partners with other international, national and regional organisations to carry out different projects. GADO also serves as a registration body for the smaller local organisations located in different valleys around Garam Chashma valley. This registration not only helps to link GADO and local organisations with the government and donors for the implementation of different projects but also to raise funds for the sustainable working of the GADO to pay for its office expenses and seven staff members' salaries.

Following GADO visit, the participants had lunch at the Injigan Hotel. After lunch, the participants visited the local Gem Stone shop where AKRSP-trained male and female staff worked on stone crating and carving, equipped with machines. Mr Hisham Mazhar, Director UCBPRP, P & D, Karachi commented, "this value addition to the existing resources is impressive like these communities have come up with Gem Stone marketing. I am keen to see UCBPRP evolves and brings value addition drawing on the resources available in Sindh".



Following the Gem Stone shop visit, the participants visited the Oocho Women Organisation Garam Chashma and met with its members. Oocho was formed in 1990 and has sustained for three decades. The meeting was housed in the Jamat Khana as all members of the Oocho were from the Ismaeli sect. The participants met the two generations, the old and current management of Oocho. Once asked from the old and former woman president about her feelings about the new management, she appeared happy to have passed over the charge to the new generation. Once informed the Oocho members about this learning and exposure visit, they also expressed a desire to have exposure to Sindh to see the warm places and places. Oocho has 26 households and 64 members and it is registered with GADO. Oocho members can have credit up to 2 lakh with a 10 % service charge. The credit can be availed for meeting any purpose including schooling, weddings, house construction, business and setting up of a stitching centre. There had been no bad loans since the formation of Ooch as social collateral has always worked to recover loans in this well-knit small community. Ocho meets every month at the Jamat Khana. Ocho's major achievements have been setting up of micro-hydro stations and laying of pipeline for water. Ocho works in close collaboration with the village organisation that has only males as its members.

The visit participants were inspired by the sustainability of the Ooch, women mobility that led to its achievements and credit-worthiness of its members. "RSPs hard work to create an ownership of community institutions that has lasted for three decades and passed one generation

to the other is really inspiring", said Miss Nasreen Baloch, Assistant Director, Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Sindh, Larkana.



Miss Sorath Ahmad Abbasi, SO Field Unit Larakana was also impressed to see the working of Ooch and reflected how it became possible, "this woman organisation has successful for nearly three decades because males of the same community have their organisation where they receive information about all ongoing and future projects and interventions. Therefore, males support their women in their development endeavours for their common good. In SUCCESS, I face a number of hurdles before I can expect women members of the community institutions to leave their homes for attending a programme meeting or a training. First of all, I and the other staff have to see the related men of these women inform and convince them why it is useful for them to allow their women top participate in SUCCESS programme. May be, I think, SUCCESS should have a dedicated activity to sensitise and involve men to make way for women members to participate fully in

the programme during and after the programme". Miss Sahfia Shah, Social Organiser, Matiari, NRSP, SUCCESS echoed with Miss Sorat saying "men's organisations should have proceeded the formation of women organisations. Because we don't have male organisations in SUCCESS, males are not interested in SUCCESS and they tell their women that these NGO people come in AC cars to waste your (women) time". Once probed her further what could be done at this stage as SUCCESS is almost halfway, she suggested, "male workshops should be

conducted to make the men aware of the benefits of SUCCESS for them and their families. This will augur well for the sustainability of the programme beyond 2021". Mrs Komal Jameel, Field Unit In-charge NRSP, TAY SUCCESS excitingly said, "though I had seven years of work experience with NRSP, my belief in the success of the RSPs three-tier social mobilisation has been renewed and I would tell my professional staff that the 3-tier structure can work as it has worked in other places".





## DAY THREE – JULY 12, 2018

The participants left for Booni at 9am and reached there by 11:27am. The first meeting and briefing was with Biyar Local Support Organisation's (LSO) manager Mr Sher Afzal and Chairman, Mr Nadeem. The manager was happy to know that the delegation was from Sindh as he recalled the support from the people of Sindh in the aftermath of the 2015 floods. He appreciated the help extended by the Health and Nutrition Society from Sindh that provided wheat and cash to the flood-affected people of the valley. The manager told that Biyar has 10 paid staff and it works with the govt. focusing on the Booni population of 30,105. The Biyar was formed in April 2005 as the company registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan. Just like GADO, the organisation supports itself through registration fees collected from the local organisations and service charge on the amount lent to the individual borrowers. In 2008, he mentioned that RSPN donated Rs. 950,000 to be used as Community Investment Fund (CIF) to facilitate only women borrowers. During the exchange of ideas, the representatives of the Biyar LSO told about the rising trend of suicide among women. They informed that women had received better education over time and due to limited opportunities in the area, they get frustrated at home, not interested in rearing animals and house chores, they aim to work outside home. The LSO plans to engage youth in its future endeavours to address this issue. A woman social organiser of Biyar LSO informed that social fabric has changed over time and 10 years before, it was not possible for

women to sit side by side to men in public meetings.

Men here usually go down the country during November – December for work since it's all snow here and economy slows down. They return in April- May next year, informed the Biyar LSO representatives. As part of new initiatives, the Biyar management told that they have started to train people in processing vegetables and fruit, apricot in particular. We have bumper produce of apricot here most of which is wasted. So much so that animals don't eat it after sometime. In the market, it is sold Rs. 300 per Kg.



Later the delegation was taken to the Booni Medical Centre established and run by Aga Khan Health Services. The centre Medical Superintendent took us on a round of the centre. Of interest was a video conferencing facility linked with Aga Khan University Hospital Karachi for providing psychiatric treatment to the patients. The centre had a well-functioning maternity ward, immunisation centre and medical testing laboratories, backed up by a stand-by generator. The MS of the hospital belonged to the area,

had been serving for the last 15 years. Another extension ward to the centre was under construction. The centre is under district health administration, funded and run by Aga Khan services. All the technical services of the centre are overseen by the Aga Khan University Hospital Karachi.

After visit to the centre, Dr Abdur Rehman Cheema recorded his comments in the visitors' book thanking and appreciating the centre administration for its facilitation extended to the delegation. The participants had lunch at the Best Western Booni Guest House.

After the lunch, the participants were led to see the women enterprise at the Booni town market run by women and set up with the support of Byar LSO. Social Organiser Shagufta led the participants. The participants took a keen interest in the handicraft prepared and marketed by the local women. Mrs Tasneem Akhtar, Deputy Director Social Welfare Department, Government of Sindh, District Tando Allah Yar, appreciated Ladies' shops with lady entrepreneurs and remarked, "we in Sindh are quite better in terms of infrastructure, mobility and less harsh climate but still women feel insecure even in the city. But here, I am impressed to see how women are running their businesses successfully. We should be bold and open micro-entrepreneurship initiatives for women of Sindh. This exposure has been a wonderful

experience in terms of opening up new ideas learning how communities work in a cross-cultural environment".

Mrs Perveen Khoso, CRP, VO Piyaro Magsi, UC Kothi Kalhori, Tehsil and Dist Larkana, and Treasurer of the LSO – Perey said, "I am very pleased to see these women entrepreneurs who stitch and sell themselves. I wish to open a centre for the women of my union council where they are trained to stitch, establish shops and become entrepreneurs to increase their income like their counterparts in Chitral".



The delegation drove back to Chitral in 2.5 hours. The delegation reached Chitral by 6 pm. Some of the participants got dropped in the Chitral market to buy local dry fruits and Chitrali souvenirs. At night, RSPN arranged a bar-b-que dinner along the Chitral river bank.

## DAY FOUR – JULY 13, 2018

Today, the delegation visited Ayun & Valleys Development Programme (AVDP) LSO where Mr Javed Ali, Social Organiser and Mr Rehmat Ali, Member Board of Directors gave a briefing about the working of the AVDP. In the briefing, it was told that AVDP had worked for the people through Poverty Reduction Programme funded by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund. Also, AVDP worked during the 2015 earthquake in rescue and relief. Mr Rehmat Ali said that AVDP works in close collaboration with the local government as five of its board members are also members of the local councils as well. Mr Muhammad Ameen Memon, Policy Adviser SUCCESS TA Earnest and Young referred this close working as a “positive overlap of LSO Board of Directors and village councils and district councils for efficient and demand-driven local development”. He also noted that “LSOs here have stood the test of time in terms of sustainability beyond their immediate founding RSPs. These are established as companies with the wider mandate of development than just by a Deputy Commissioner’s notification, bound with a project. Over time, we need to follow similar practices to make SUCCESS LSOs work beyond project life”.

Mr Abdul Hameed Samejo, HRD Officer TRDP Jamshoro echoed similar views saying, “LSOs here plan interventions by themselves without any external funding, almost impossible for me to think so about SUCCESS LSOs at this stage. LSOs here have strong coordination with VOs from whom they take fees and register them with them for project designing and

implementation. I take a lot of inspiration to work on SUCCESS LSOs to follow suit”.



Later, the delegation went to Bumburet, Kalash Valley. The participants visited another Gem Stone cutting shop located next to the houses of the Kelashi people. Here the delegation met a woman from Garam Chashma who was training Kelashi women in Gem Stone-cutting. Noor Bano, TRDP, SUCCESS, CRP, Channa UC, VO Dilawar Jatoi was inspired with the work of Kelashi women and said, “women are supported by men in this area and the social organisers of this area must be working hard to make this happen. I should be as good as these women are as social mobilisers”. Miss Samina Barkat Ali, Training coordinator SRSO PIU Sukker said, “I am touched by the small businesses, projects and small markets set up by these communities and the support these receive from their RSPs. I will argue that in SUCCESS, we need to build in the cost of toolkit and market linkages in the cost of the training so that training beneficiaries can be usefully employed”.

Afterwards, the delegation saw a performance of Kelashi dance and had lunch. The participants visited the Kelashi Museum and were given a briefing about the evolution of life of Kelashi people and their culture. The delegation also visited the Kelashi graveyard and saw naked bones of the dead buried in open since old times, a custom not followed now. In the afternoon, the delegation returned to Chitral.



## DAY FIVE – JULY 14, 2018

This day started with a briefing at the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) Chitral Office. The briefing was given by Mr Tariq Ahmad, District Manager Chitral also joined by Mr Innayat, Social Organiser and an engineer at 930am. Mr Tariq informed that SRSP was established in 1989 and its Chitral chapter was opened in January 2002. Among the key areas of intervention have been Social Mobilisation, Natural Resource Management, Women Development, and Enterprise Development. In response to a question about its working relationship with that of AKRSP, Mr Tariq told that AKRSP and SRSP don't shy to work together and in many places, same community organisations work with both partners". He informed that since 2002, 1450 million funds' have been invested for the people of Chitral through SRSP. Among its major contributions have been setting up of micro hydro projects.

In response to question what value is created once projects are undertaken with communities, he mentioned of the construction of Sweer Bridge to improve the road connection of a number of villages with the main road. The construction, 8.7 million, was funded by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund. The communities provided labour and some wood. He quoted C&W Xeon that the cost would have been more than three times, around 30 million, had this bridge been built by the Communication & Works Department. Even after the construction of the bridge, maintenance is easy as communities look after the bridge and do not allow heavy vehicles to pass. Mr Abdullah bin Javed, Management

Information Officer, RSPN, SUCCESS remarked, "I am surprised to see how government can actually leverage community institutions to save money, reduce maintenance cost and increase efficiency by working through community institutions. Though I deal with community institutions' data mainly, it gives me a real feeling of what these institutions stand for and how they organise people, create ownership and channelize their interests for the collective interest".





Mr Ghulam Sarwar Khero, Programme Coordinator SUCCESS, RSPN reflected on the day saying, “all the RSPs work is time-tested but our RSPs are only 10-12 years old. These old RSPs social mobilisation systems are strong. Comparatively, these are advanced. Additionally, these RSPs had the advantage of the geography. This area has been continually disaster struck and this led to opportunities of working with people for these RSPs. People saw them working on the ground and this led to winning the trust of these organisations from their communities. Then communities owned their work and sustainability question was addressed. Besides, community organisations, over time, have been able to get the government support by having elected representatives in their management. Our COs/VOs/LSOs are limited to the SUCCESS programme only. But as SRSP informed that concurrently here VOs/CO also get registered with other development partners and this leads to their

sustainability. Learning from this exposure visit, I will take up this matter to encourage SUCCESS LSOs to get connected with other development partners for their long-term sustainability”.

The greenery and plantation in villages also got the attention of the participants. Mr Abdul Fatah Khoso, District Forest Officer, Jamshoro said, “I was not aware of such an extensive outreach from top to field level of the RSPs that has so many volunteer workers. Upon return, I will engage communities to work along forest department in planting season. Also, I will share with my department colleagues about this huge community institutions’ network and ask them to involve communities to increase sustainability prospects of the forestation campaigns”.

At 1 pm, the delegation met the newly posted Deputy Commissioner (DC) Chitral, Mr Khursheed Alam Mehsud over a cup of tea. The DC had been posted in Tharparkar and had experience of Sindh Administration experience. Mr Ghulam Sarwar Khero, Programme Coordinator SUCCESS, RSPN introduced the delegation and told about the aim of the learning visit. The DC welcomed the group and asked for any suggestions to make things better. The group suggested improving the area infrastructure and facilitating

movements of tourists by simplifying security procedures and better coordination between police and Levies posts. Later the group had SRSP sponsored lunch at Terichmir View Hotel, Chitral. In the afternoon, some of the group members went shopping in the Chitral town market.



### **DAY SIX – JULY 15, 2018**

The delegation returned to Islamabad by road.





## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<b>Abdullah Bin Javaid</b>	MIS Officer SUCCESS RSPN
<b>Muhammad Ameen Memon</b>	Policy Adviser SUCCESS TA
<b>Abdul Hameed Samejo</b>	HRD Officer TRDP Jamshoro
<b>Samina Barkat Ali</b>	Training coordinator SRSO PIU Sukker
<b>Noor Bano</b>	TRDP, SUCCESS, CRP, Channa UC, VO Dilawar Jatoi
<b>Tasneem Akhtar</b>	DD Social Welfare TAY
<b>Sahfia Shah</b>	Social Organiser, Matiari, NRSP, SUCCESS
<b>Komal Jameel</b>	Filed Unit In charge TAY SUCCESS
<b>Perveen Khoso</b>	CRP, VO Piyaro Magsi, UC Kothi Kalhori, Larkana, Treasurer in LSO Perey
<b>Nasreen Baloch</b>	AD Social Welfare Larkana
<b>Hisham Mazhar</b>	Director UCBPRP, P & D, Karachi
<b>Ghulam Sarwar Khero</b>	Programme Coordinator SUCCESS, RSPN
<b>Sorath Ahmad Abbasi</b>	SO Field Unit Larakan
<b>Abdul Fatah Khoso</b>	dist Forest Officer, jamshoro
<b>Asad Ejaz Khan</b>	Administration and Procurement Officer, SUCCESS, RSPN
<b>Dr Abdur Rehman Cheema</b>	Team Leader Research SUCCESS, RSPN



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