



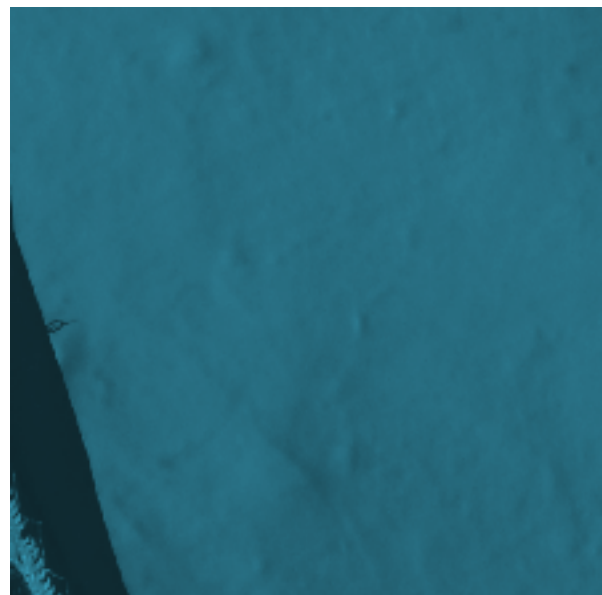
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ECHES

S U J A W A L

2018



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THE ECHOES OF SUCCESS

In 2018, as the European Union funded Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) programme nears its three-year mark, the project is already halfway through. When it began in 2015, the RSPs associated with it, National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP), Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), and Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), conducted an incredibly comprehensive Poverty Scorecard Survey to gauge the level of poverty, financial standing, and needs of potential beneficiaries.

Three years later, the SUCCESS team has conducted multiple activities to not only track the progress of the programme but also document the stories of beneficiaries from the field. This series of success stories titled 'The Echoes of SUCCESS' is a compilation of human interest stories which narrates the experiences of the beneficiaries and the implementing team regarding various interventions under SUCCESS in each district.

The SUCCESS documentation team at RSPN, in collaboration with the associated RSPs, have tried to talk to beneficiaries and their families to glean first-hand accounts of the changes SUCCESS has brought to these communities. These stories, more than any reductive method that measures only financial condition, allows a glimpse into the lived experience of women empowerment in the target areas of SUCCESS. In this regard, they are imperative to learn what empowerment in this context may look like and what processes precede it. These lessons will prove to be vital as SUCCESS forges its path ahead and prepares to wrap up later in communities that will soon learn to sustain themselves.

Preface

Community-driven development (CDD) empowers poor people and is relevant across many sectors. It gives control over resources and decision-making power to clustered communities. Treating the needy like partners in the development phase, building on their existing networks and resources rather than considering them as a burden on the nation, makes them self-reliant. This approach entails that poor communities do not only have more capacity than generally acknowledged but that they also gain the most by effectively utilising the targeted resources for alleviating poverty.

For the SUCCESS programme, this CDD approach works as the main ingredient to foster more economic activities revolving around women empowerment. By filling the gap between the community and the state, and by improving the poverty reduction measures, the SUCCESS programme aims at providing both, instant relief and long-lasting results, at the grassroots. This programme complements the non-government and government-run programmes. Interestingly, there are other programmes running simultaneously as well, in Sujawal, and the way these programmes complement SUCCESS's mandate in providing to the needs of the community is remarkable. This has benefitted numerous communities at a large scale, thus witnessing far-reaching poverty alleviation impacts.

Throughout the field visits to Sujawal and the experiences demonstrated during the interviews it was quite evident that directly trusting and relying on the destitute to drive development activities has made efforts of poverty reduction more reactive, comprehensive, sustainable, and cost-effective than traditional approaches. Hence, given the clear rules of the game, poor men and women can efficiently organise themselves and take care of the goods and services that they prioritise. It has also become quite clear that the community members, as consumers, are the most well informed, legitimate, and the most trustworthy sources of information about their own priorities.

For example, in the Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI) story covered in this issue, the villagers have built streets in their settlements rather than considering latrines as their

first priority. It was a little strange for us as to why open defecation did not trigger them as much as the poor road facility did. This substantiates that it all actually depends on the residents of the area, and what might be important for us may not work just as well for others. All these decisions are made on mutual agreement by the tanzeem members. SUCCESS programme gives women control over decisions and resources, providing them with a chance to build social capital by expanding the depth and range of their linkages. As the District Programme Officer (DPO) Sujawal also said in his interview, "This programme gives women more power," which was not the case previously. This kind of women networking, which is dynamic for longer run in terms of progress and development, has also positive short term effects on prosperity and welfare of the community.

One might as well notice in the ensuing pages that majority of the women from the field cases have covered their faces or are merely showing their presence in the photograph. In addition, they were not allowed to go out of their homes, hence considering the strong patriarchal ethos of the area, the women of Sujawal have come a long way and many have been mobilised through the formation of tanzeems, while some still struggle. Some of the villagers were a bit reluctant to welcome our male colleague inside their home for interviews. As a Village Organisation's (VO) manager Farzana laughingly puts it, "If a male comes in, they will cut off my head and the trouble will fall down on me."

What one could grasp is that these women have learnt that by walking boldly in the winds of their storms they could strengthen themselves and emerge victorious - ready to help others. Women of Sujawal, as you will see in the forthcoming stories as well, are increasingly being empowered to choose the course of their own lives and professions, simultaneously realising their fullest potential. As the objective of this programme is not only about increasing the incomes of the people or improving their poverty indicators but also about expanding people's real freedom. It is a whole journey from igniting a spark to a cherishing a bonfire within.

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SOCIAL **EMPOWERMENT** OF WOMEN



Mubarak Bano is a member of Community Organisation (CO) Ibrahim Tarero in village Sarvach Nagar Ibrahim Tarero, and also has been working as a Community Resource Person (CRP). In contrast to her bold eyes, she had an overall calm personality with traits that of an introvert. Her eyes could speak more than what she had uttered during our conversation but if not more we could gather just the right information needed to write this piece.

She has two daughters and has been a member of her CO for the last two years. She still recalls how the women of her village were against the idea of women *tanzeems* and how they had questions about what good they would do them. In return she argued with many women and would answer them that these *tanzeems* would help solve their daily issues and problems and that

they would learn about the solutions to their health issues and will get to know about the benefits of savings too.

“We will move forward and we will go to every village possible to ease their pain and solve their issues,” said Bano.

Now, these same women regard *tanzeems* highly. Bano explains that the distribution of Micro Health Insurance Cards and Income Generating Grants (IGG) have exceedingly changed the villagers' perspective about *tanzeems* and the interventions have highly uplifted their living standards as well. The work can be repetitive, dull, and monotonous for Bano, but the end result is all the motivation that she needs. It was tough starting out, taking a chance as a responsible person, but now she has opened doors of opportunities not only for herself but for others as well.



تماکو یا صحت، تھیلو اوهان جو

- سگريٽ سگار يا شيشو ۽ ٻيڙي جو استعمال خطرناڪ ۽ نهي جو آهي تاهي ڇڏيندو آهي.
- تماڪ جي استعمال سان مختلف قسم جي ڪينسر جي بيماري ٿيڻ جا خطرو ٿي وڃن ٿا.
- ٿڪڻ جا ۽ ٻيا ٽڪيسر تماڪ جي استعمال سان ٿين ٿا.
- تماڪ ڪاڇي مان جي بيماريءَ ذريعي مسئلن ڪندڙن جي سگريٽ پيئڻ سان ٿي.
- هر سگريٽ پيئڻ سان گڏ موت جي ٻه منٽ وڌيڪ ٿي ٿي آهي.
- توکين مان پاس نه موجود ماڻهن جي سگريٽ پيئڻ جي توھان جي صحت کي به متاثر ڪري ٿي.





The greatest hurdle that she wants to work on is to change the mind-set of the people towards women. Bano wants women to work and be on their own without having to depend on any man. She was a shy person and would not leave the house, and expounded her CO's manager, but now after becoming the CRP she is the one who talks non-stop, showing how empowered she has become.

Due to her involvement with her *tanzeem*, Bano has also continued her studies and comes regularly to the CO Manager to study for sixth grade. "I want to study till Matric," said Bano shyly, "After coming to *tanzeems* and becoming a CRP I have realised that education is important and that I should restart from where I left."

This is the type of change Bano wants to see in her fellow villagers too. Being a mother of two daughters she plans on sending them to Sujawal city for higher education and set an example for others to follow.





Village Organisation (VO)
Farzana
Kharra

“Some things are not easy to achieve,” says Farzana from Fateh Mohammad Somroo, “you will always come across hurdles.”

It was difficult for her to carry out the new responsibilities she was assigned. As being the manager of her Village Organisation (VO) Kharra, 13 Community Organisations (COs) are under her supervision that now look to her for guidance and directions. Unfortunately, she had to face opposition from her family, “My brother is a moulvi, and so is my father-in-law, hence leaving the house was a real struggle for me.” At first, she used to sneak out of the house to attend or conduct meetings but with increasing responsibilities she had to explain her duties to them. They did not take it well at first but later because of her persistence, they had to give up.

“All the people in the villages call me *Adi* (sister) now,” said Farzana.

Now that she openly works for the mobilisation of her women *tanzeems*, her VO has started to function more conscientiously. She did not even go to the nearby villages before, and going now as a VO manager was a great challenge for herself.

Farzana concentrates more on education and the first thing that strikes her about education is the knowledge gained. She is adamant that change starts from within and to prove her point, she took admission with her daughter and enrolled in matric. “We have got our certificates just this year,” exclaimed Farzana. It was mesmerising to see how she talked about it, and convinced the women to school their daughters as well, “Education has the ability to change us into better human beings, helping us develop new perspectives about life, developing our abilities and capabilities. I always wanted to go out and learn new things and improve our village's condition.” Thanks to her efforts, sixteen girls from her village go to Sujawal to attend college now.

“If a boy gets education it is very good but if a girl gets education it is even better, after all it is the woman who has to look after the household and run the family.”

There are many lessons that the VO imparts and things have already started taking shape. Her VO has planted around 1300 trees, distributed to different COs, in various locations. Further, birth certificates were not given much importance before and were not even a priority. But now with great efforts she has made almost 700 new birth certificates.

As they say 'no pain, no gain,' one needs to be willing to look at oneself with a 'no excuses' attitude and be willing to make the required changes. The more you do the right thing even when it's hard, the easier it gets.



The sun beats unrestrainedly upon a lonely building, it is an unremarkable sight yet a source of hope for the area.

This small, inconspicuous building houses the LSO Ghottaro's office, and in it, one will often find Jamila, the general secretary of LSO Ghottaro.

She starts her story citing how they have spanned their women's networking circle and are now able to communicate much more effectively than ever before. From record keeping to supervising the Community Resource Persons (CRP'S), everything is in coordination and rightly administered under her.

"Record keeping is given much more attention here; we keep records and reports of everything, so we have quite a few responsibilities here in the LSO. We have also made

greater linkages between government and non-government people as well, regarding health and education," affirmed Jamila.

Jamila believes that *tanzeems* have greatly improved their communication with the government, as previously there was no such thing as women arranging meetings with government officials. This linkage has given them more power to influence and bring a positive change in their surroundings. "We do face hurdles at times, as women around here are not allowed to go out or interact with men. For example, we had to face opposition for arranging a TVST session, but LSO tries to cater to all those problems."

In village Sumaar Parhedi, there was no school and due to traveling costs, the parents would not send their children



OFFICE (S)



to schools in nearby villages either. “So through our LSO, we opened a school for the kids there,” said Jamila. Briefing further about the initiatives taken by LSO Ghottaro, Jamila narrates another anecdote from the village Nooro Kunjorro where polio teams were sent back, not allowed to even enter their villages, let alone their houses, for polio vaccination. So the LSO talked to the leaders of the village and convinced them to cooperate as it was for their own good.

And recently, the building where she sits was even proposed to be turned into a girl's school so that the girls have easier access to a school, and the parents have no reason to discourage them from attending, “This is a boy's middle school. We have sent an application to the higher authorities two months ago for the conversion,” informed Jamila. Apart from that, six women from the LSO have also been encouraged to apply for the posts of Lady Health Visitors (LHV) and have appeared for the test as well and are currently awaiting their results.

The LSO has great plans for the future, “we are thinking to set up medical camps in various regions at a larger scale, regarding vaccinations, malaria and other prevalent diseases.” Another important aspect, which the LSO deems important to work on, is the school enrolment rates in their Union Council.





WOMEN LEADERSHIP



Teaching and learning are universal concepts, irrespective of age or location. Community Skills Management Trainings (CMSTs) seek to add welfare to a person's life through teaching. Amir Jan the president of Community Organisation (CO) Kalsawa 1, can wholeheartedly vouch for its effectiveness.

The story of how Amir Jan came to be involved in this project starts with a visit to National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) unit of Sujawal. She had been voted to be the president of her CO; and was then being taught how a CO is formed and managed. In addition to this, she attended a Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) session where matters of sanitation, health, education, and more were taught.

Travelling to unit Sujawal might have proved to be a challenge,

but NGOs had come to her village before and this familiarity eased it for her, as otherwise she might not have been as eager. The women in her village were similarly eager to learn, as they had studied till fifth grade, after which a Non-Formal Basic Education Centre taught them till Matric, thus even the girls in the village could understand that all this would do them good.

Amir Jan recalls, "The first day, we were anxious; after all we did not know what kind of environment we would be entering. However, the NRSP had given us training for disaster management on a previous occasion at our village, so we somewhat knew what we were getting into." Willingness to participate is a factor which often prevents people in rural areas from fully benefiting from programmes meant to help them; hence the

eagerness shown here was crucial for all those involved.

One must learn before one can teach, Amir Jan describes her first few lessons thusly, “We had learnt about disaster management before, this was completely new. We had never considered the benefits that savings bring, after all it seemed counter intuitive, why should it matter whether we spent our money now, or at a later time? To guard against tragedies, was a huge benefit, it meant we did not have to borrow and could quickly deal with problems whenever they arose.”

She further adds, “We learned many things to do with health, such as vaccinating pregnant women. We knew it is something that had to be done, but we did not know which vaccinations we should take and when. In addition we learnt what illnesses like pneumonia were, their symptoms, and how to treat them.”

People often take knowledge like this for granted, but the knowledge personally helped her and her family, “It really came in handy, this child of mine sitting here, she had pneumonia, we considered taking her to the city but did not know how bad it was,

after our training sessions, we figured out what she had and treated her accordingly.”

As great as the benefits were, to her, they were compounded when she began teaching them to her village as part of the CMST. Cleanliness varies from village to village, some care for themselves more than others. The kids would have diarrhoea and the parents would not know what caused it. Even when they cleaned regularly, cleaning before meals was not as common; also, they would not focus on whether kids had washed their hands before a meal. All these were remedied with Amir Jan's help.

Marriage can greatly affect a person's life; it is not a decision that should be taken lightly. Yet many are carelessly sent along the path of marriage. Amir Jan explains, “People rarely consider the age of marriage; families thought that, if a girl was healthy, after a certain age she would only tax their resources so it would be better to marry her off, ideally as quickly as possible. My brother had married someone and his wife's brother would marry one of my sisters, basically becoming an exchange. My sister was young whilst the person she

would be marrying was old. She was so young that she could not take care of herself and her children, meanwhile the husband ended up being lazy and not industrial, but she had children now and could not just leave them or her husband. If she had been older she might have known how to better take care of herself and her family.”

What she and others in her village have been living like, may have turned their lives for the worse, but now they have learnt how to guard themselves, ensuring a future free of such sorrows.

Mehrunissa had to take a moment to gather herself. She was exhausted with all the cleaning and household chores she had been doing. Despite it all, her face displayed a vigorous smile. Mehrunissa pointed to an old woman seated nearby. "She has been my greatest support," Mehrunissa joyously introduced her aunt.

Without even uttering a single word her aunt only smiled back as Mehrunissa went on to praise her and explained how much she admired her unyielding efforts to promote girls education and their equal standing in their village. In addition, ever since becoming a Community Resource Person (CRP), Mehrunissa had been following her aunt's example.

Administering around twelve Community Organisations (CO) under her supervision, Mehrunissa was no alien to the

work she is responsible for now. Possessing a remarkable drive, she was always on the forefront of school activities and enjoyed presenting her talents and skills on various platforms - working for the betterment of her village. "I was a youth group member as well," she asserted, "And always wanted my village to be a modern village." National Rural Support Programme's (NRSP) trainings further polished her skills and showed her the way forward.

Briefing about the work she had done till then, she claimed that she enjoyed giving CAT sessions the most. It instilled a sense of pride in her that the lessons will serve her audience well in the future and most importantly she was well aware that she is making the lives of girls in her village easier and better.



“I tell them that both girls and boys should be equally treated and if a boy is studying the girl should study too.”

Early age marriages were a common phenomenon and girl's education was a foreign notion in Mehrunissa's village. Whenever a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) tried to enter their territory, the villagers would raise slogans against them. But things are changing for good now. It is not as it was before. Girls are leaving their houses for schools, “Early in the morning, you will see auto rickshaw's filled with children,” Mehrunissa declared with pride. Marriages are delayed till the girls reach the age of 20 at least and the villagers are more welcoming towards NGOs now. Health and hygiene sessions have greatly improved the wellbeing of her villagers and the concept of using latrines is slowly emerging as well. Furthermore, people have shown more trust in the SUCCESS programme over the year as they have witnessed the positive effects the interventions have brought in their lives, making her work easier without having to waste her energy on convincing the people to cooperate.

Apart from her own tireless efforts, Mehrunissa credits all this positive change to National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and appreciates their work in her village. The experience with NRSP has brought a lot of change in her too, with her growing interest in the work, she sees herself as an advocate and a social activist and she cannot wait to see her dreams come true.





ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN





In the village of Ham Sava, Shahida strives to secure her family's future. Her two sons and daughter, no doubt miss their father, a police officer who passed away three years ago, leaving her alone to care for their children. Being a single mother is hard enough; not being able to earn a living would have made the future of this family even bleaker. A shop now stands between their wellbeing and poverty, one Shahida might not have had, if she did not have the opportunity to take a loan - the Community Investment Fund (CIF).

She started her story by saying, "I felt fortunate at the moment; I had received some funds from my husband's workplace after he passed away, but these were starting to run out. What would have happened to me, or my children? We live with my mother, my brother, and sister,

my mother receives a pension from my father's passing away, and my brother owns a shop. Each of us tries to take care of ourselves, but I am sure if my situation worsened each of them would have helped me. Still, for my children's sake, it would have been best if I had a livelihood."

"I used to do embroidery before, and with my husband's earnings we would make ends meet, but now since this was no longer an option, I thought why not open a shop. My parents used to keep one, attached to our house in fact, but over time it fell into disrepair and we shut it down. The fact that this room existed, people knew a shop had existed there, and I had obtained some experience there meant that this would be my best option."

"About five months ago, I received a loan of fifteen

thousand rupees, and used it to set up the shop again and buy goods to sell. Being attached to my house, I did not need to travel for work, and I could do housework as well. Whenever I have to cook food for my children, or do other housework, I make my oldest son sit in the shop for a while, making this a very convenient set up for me. My brother has a shop, at some distance away, so we do not really compete, also the fact that he has to buy goods for his shop, means I just ask him to buy my goods for me whilst he is at it.”

Shahida manages the shop just fine, she has studied till grade five, so could work with numbers. In addition, her experience seeing her parents operate it for a time also helped her settle in. Describing her life now, she said, “My biggest worry was my children's future. There were times when they would ask for school supplies and it would take me ages to get it for them, if I managed to get anything at all. Their expenses would be sure to increase with time, after all they are all growing; eventually they will get married, what then? At least we are living well now, I have

already paid back half the loan, once I have paid it all back, I can start saving in earnest.”

Having a family is an asset, it is why Shahida does not mind living with her mother and siblings, and similarly, Shahida believes that she should do whatever she can to secure her family's future. For her children, this includes doing everything for them their father might have; to be twice as involved, and work twice as hard. But at the end of the day what could she have done if she could not stand on her own two feet?

Shahida has managed to turn things around; the CIF fulfilled its purpose remarkably. Once the money is returned in full, it is revolved and given to another beneficiary who needs it. This would mean another will follow her story of success.







Technical and Vocational
Skills Training (TVST)

Salma

Fateh Muhammad Sungu

We owe our current world to the accumulated skills of numerous generations. The transfer of skills and techniques is paramount, not only for keeping society moving forward, but also for personal success. So it was that Salma, of village Fateh Muhammad Sungu, was observed taking a leap in prosperity.

Her husband, a tailor, provides for her and their two children; a son who is two years old and a daughter who is four years old. He provides them well enough that they are properly fed and have a roof over their heads, but life is about more than just survival. Hopes and dreams for a better future, both for herself and her family prompted Salma to attend a Technical and Vocational Skills Training (TVST).

Training took place in February and March of 2018, a two-month course to teach the participants how to do dress designing. This way they would be better able to provide for themselves. TVSTs are not limited to teaching dress

design; they include a variety of skills such as weaving, applying make-up for boutiques, and more. The goal here is being able to include women in the labour force that they may improve their lives, and in general - the society.

Her motivations were plain, "I thought I would get some savings together, help get my house in order and also make my children's future more stable. I have studied till Matric, but that was not enough; I always wanted to learn more but there was no means to study. This was not limited to just my education, I knew how to sew, since my father was a tailor, but to take that forward was a passion of mine. How could I do something I never learnt, who could teach me? After all my father and later my husband could stitch clothes, and do pretty much the basics, but they could not do more."

After learning at the TVST, she put together an organised setup, "My husband's shop receives orders, He brings the fabric to me, within two days, the dresses are complete and he takes them back to his shop, to return to the customers. It works wonderfully, because now with two small children to look after I cannot set up a shop

myself, so this is the best way to earn through my skills. After all I now have thirty thousand rupees in savings."

Things are going splendidly in her life currently; she even managed to buy herself gold jewellery. Such a purchase might seem excessive but where banks do not exist, this is the way in which savings can be held as gold retains its value, can be sold later for money, and has some practical use; being easier to store and keep track of.

So why could not she have learnt to design dresses herself? How often does one learn anything by his or herself, without the aid of teachers, books or tutorials? Though the jump from stitching to designing seems small, the concepts behind them have been developed over the course of human history, and cannot be taught to oneself without some form of aid. She could sew before, but she could not design, this made a big difference as most women in the village can stitch clothes to repair holes or the like, but could not design elaborate dresses.

This change in her life might not have happened at all if the TVST had not taken

place in her village. If it had happened elsewhere, she might not have gotten permission to attend them. Even now, she cannot get permission to go to cities such as Karachi, because if the relatives residing in Karachi would see them walking around Karachi they are sure to start gossip and spread rumours. She says, "So it is for many girls in rural Sindh," but seeing positive examples such as Salma's, people's mind-set is changing,

A simple change such as earning more money opens new avenues in people's lives. Who knows what Salma's future holds, but it is certainly brighter, now that she can better shape it.

So many live their lives earning so very little, it is a wonder how they manage it. Yet they go on, with few avenues to explore and no room for complaint, after all who would hear them? But so it is for many, and in order to provide opportunities to these people, interventions such as the Income Generating Grants (IGGs) are being implemented as part of the SUCCESS programme. One such beneficiary is Nathi.

She has one daughter and three sons, all of them go to school except for the youngest. Her poverty score is eight making it difficult to manage finances as her husband is a daily wage earner with no guarantee of a pay check.

Being a mother of four children, she is at a loss every day to feed and clothe them. As hard as it is to raise them, it gets harder to afford schooling supplies, yet what options does she have. An education might be the only thing





that could give her children a future different from what their parents have been through, and so they must go without food from time to time. Buying a school uniform means borrowing money, then enduring a frugal existence trying to pay it back, yet this was the only way they could ensure an education.

She learnt sewing from a neighbour, thinking that might help with the household finances and will help her husband with the bills and expenses. Perhaps for a split second her grief was suspended, thinking things might turn in her advantage but as they could not afford a machine on their own, she could not monetarily benefit from her learnt skill and so was left helpless.

Then something amazing happened, like a light turning on in a dark room. She became eligible for the IGG with which she bought a second hand sewing machine, this gave her power; a means to earn. Small difference though it might seem, it means the world to her, after all where tomorrow once meant worrying, it is now seen as another day to earn and pave the way forward.

“Now I make around PKR 2000 every month, I try hard but I am still unable to save. With the increasing school expenses on pens, copies and on multiple others things, it gets really challenging. Nonetheless, not only is my passion for sewing fulfilled but now with the earnings it is easier for me to manage the household expenses as well.”

The tide of fortune seems to have swung, and Nathi's hopes have swung with it, she keenly pays attention to her children's needs so that they grow into a life she never dreamed of for herself.



The scars that mark our bodies might feel strange to others but only by walking boldly in the winds of our storms do we strengthen and emerge conquering. And to that self we rightly should learn to clinch.

“He was my son, who died,” whispered a woman, swallowing hard as if trying to get rid of a sour taste, “He was just 17,” she continued. The news had passed through her like a hurricane.

At some point in life, we all, experience mirth at the fullest, while at other times it leaves us despondent and in a state of complete melancholy. She was devastated seeing her son helplessly lying on the floor while she screamed in every direction for help. The pouring rain was not a blessing for her anymore, as it only added to her misery. Due to the downpour, the pathway was submerged leaving them no way to rush him to the hospital and neither could a vehicle reach them.







“He writhed in agony on the ground,” said the head of the village Ali Mohammad and in no time the snake venom had completely spread in his body, taking his life.

It was nothing new for them; the loss of lives, the inconveniences, and the struggles that they go through on a daily basis due to poor road infrastructure. For they have been stuck in this for decades.

“How were we supposed to take patients to the hospital? The vehicles would not enter the villages,” bellowed Imaam zadi, Village Organisation (VO) Junaay Jaan's president.

“How could we carry a woman patient?” exclaimed Ali Mohammad simultaneously.

Another women spoke up and narrated how at one point, due to the heavy rainfall and water stagnation, the men had to carry a body for funeral on a charpoy with all its four legs in Cauldrons so that it could easily float on water. “You see how it was a problem?” exclaims Imaam Zadi.

The frustration kept on building up but there was nothing they could do to amend things - nothing worked before their

destitution. It was finally a relief when the Community Physical infrastructure (CPI) scheme was introduced to them. Taking the opportunity, the whole Union Council of Shah Mohammad Shah knew what they were in great need of and agreed to construct proper pathways in the village so as to cope during heavy rainfalls. After two months of non-stop work, the village was webbed with well-constructed pathways.

“Now that we have this facility, it has become much easier for us. We are really happy with this work,” expressed Imaam Zadi.

“We are indebted to National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and the European Union,” said Ali Mohammad. “Without their help we still would have been drowning and no one could do what they have done for us.”





Micro-Health Insurance (MHI)

Noori

Muhammad Siddiq Bandro

Noori married her cousin who was partially blind from birth and it was their hard luck that the only 2 surviving children out of the 9 births were blind too. She knew that she was about to get married to a blind man but did not whine then. Due to family connection and relationship she could not complain and accepted her fate as given to her but after bearing the consequences and going through the everyday struggles she says, “now I fight with my family and ask them to help and support me as I was given to a blind man”. Her husband's brother is also facing a similar condition and his children are blind and hence, it is seemingly a genetic problem.

Her husband due to the eye condition makes 'charpais' at home while she makes Rillis and does the related embroidered work. Her monthly income revolves around 1000 Rs and charges 500 Rs per Rilli which is not enough to make the ends meet. In future she plans on cattle rearing as a source

of income generation. She is optimistic that as her livestock increases she can then sell and make profits accordingly but now the family's income generation activity is less not only due to her blind husband but also because she is confined to her infants who needs constant attention and hence not being a helping hand towards generating income.

She kept on giving birth, in order to be blessed with a healthy child without any abnormalities who could be a real savior for the family. With no fruitful outcome and being totally unaware why she was giving birth to stillborn, giving new births only deteriorated the situation as they were only left with hospital expenses. During her first child birth, everyone in the family pooled funds and got rid of the 15000/- bill, but this was not the case for all the 9 births. Her family did not always came forward in case of need, at crucial times she even had to sell her goats as well to pay off the hospital bills and other expenses.

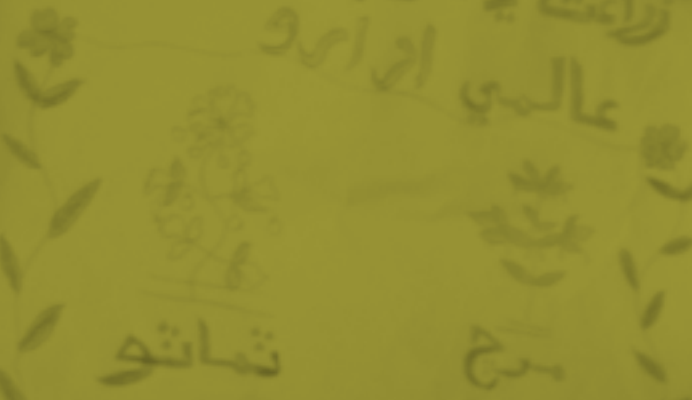
No mother has to go through this, it is definitely heart wrenching for any person to know about a still born, let alone what might go through the women who carries

him/her for 9 months in her womb. It is even more disturbing to know that financial difficulties she had to keep a dead child inside her, "I knew that I was carrying a still born but could not go to the doctor due to financial crisis and after four to five days when I could not take it anymore I went to get operated and used the health card there". If it was not for the MIH card only God knows how long she would have carried the child and due to the joining the tanzeem Noori finally took a long pause from giving birth.



زراعت و خوراک جو

عالمی ادارہ



گل گریپ

گیشن لہو

لاہران، عائشہ پوری

شہداد، شمع بیہ نظرانی

پاکستان

عالمی ادارہ

پاکستان

بنگلہ دیش

تھانٹو

مرج

گل گریپ

گیشن لہو

لاہران، عائشہ پوری

شہداد، شمع بیہ نظرانی

پاکستان



LEGAL
EMPOWERMENT



Changing the world was never going to be a task for one person or one type of mind, there is a reason we all are different. We need to understand these differences ourselves at first and then set out to change the world around us. Changing the world means changing the way we approach numerous things, but in the end they are not easy to do.

The hard part for Shama, being a Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) beneficiary was finding the courage to walk away from the well-trodden path of inattentiveness and carelessness towards health, education, and acknowledging the importance of other key elements in life. Shama was afraid to leave the house for the session, afraid to interact with the people fearing how the session might go, “Whether we will be able to answer their questions, how will we come back, who will take care of the

children and who will manage the house,” all these questions were flooding her thoughts.

For her, change was for the brave of heart, for she had a true desire to make the world better for all. She gathered the courage to leave behind her five daughters and two sons for three days and went to Sujawal for the CAT sessions. Luckily, from the very beginning, Shama's husband, who is a primary school teacher, is supportive and has never stopped her from going anywhere. Without any objection, his husband managed to take care of the home and children in her absence.

“He would even cook for our children in my absence,” said Shama with a smile, “We used to spend the whole day working and labouring in the fields and by the end of the day we would knead the flour

without even washing our hand,” narrated Shama indignantly, “It is no one’s fault, we just did not know,” she continued.

Apart from the spread of diseases like diarrhoea and other stomach problems, the villagers had to bear hospitals bills and manage the finances from what little they were earning. Now that she thinks of all those times of ignorance and negligence, she cannot really put the blame on anyone specific but surely appreciates the work done so far by NRSP in the form of CAT sessions.

“Now there are lesser diseases and so less worrying about the hospital bills and people have also adopted the concept of saving as well. Before making any transaction they think twice now, how much to spend and how much to save,” she said.

From sharing the formula for making *Nimkol* (Oral Rehydration Salts ORS) to acknowledging the significance of Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs), the lessons in the CAT sessions have served the villagers well. They did not know the importance of birth certificates before or for unmarried girls to even own a

CNIC let alone making her own legal decisions; all this information was disseminated during the CAT sessions.

“Now, we only vote for those who we know will actually work. We even communicate to the men that who to vote for and who to ignore,” cackled Shama pompously.

She is on a whole new mission; her duty shuns herself in order to achieve something for others because for her it just feels right. In the end, to strive for everyone and not only yourself is truly worthwhile.



Joint Development Committees (JDCs)

Hameeda

Shah Muhammad Shah

The distance between a government civil servant and an ordinary villager, is absolutely huge. It is a gap some never would have thought possible to close. Hameeda, president of Local Support Organisation (LSO) Shah Muhammad Shah and a member of the area's Joint Development Committee (JDC), is part of a new link formed between those asking for change and those capable of providing it.

She has five children, three daughters and two sons. Her Husband works at a sugar mill. When asked about how she got to her position ahead of others, she replied, "Many of my fellow villagers could not speak in Urdu and were also a bit nervous to take part at this level and hence I was chosen for my position. It means I am very busy, but we each have to make time."





She adds, “I am not poor myself, but if someone takes comfort from my deeds, it warms my heart. I am also president in my CO, and also in my VO. It is hard, sometimes I wonder if I was selected for this position simply because no one else wanted to do the necessary legwork. The travel associated is probably why many cannot take part in meetings at VO or LSO level. I do not mind this, nor the responsibility.”

Looking back, she laughed and said, “At every level, my fellows pushed me into the spotlight, I try to show that I am confident, maybe that is why, but with a young child to take care of, it is still hard. Sometimes I get flooded with work because I am involved in so much, but I try not to complain, I should consider myself fortunate to be in a position where I can help everyone.”

Recalling the JDC's journey, she explained, “We have only had one JDC meeting so far, but it seemed positive. I have mentioned that travel was difficult; roads do not exist between many communities, they often exist between households in villages, not to the villages themselves. Because of this, it was our first request at the JDC. For

example the village of Lal Baksh, has a Kohli community. Rains almost cut the community off entirely, forming stagnating pools that last for a long time. It has a road now. Out of all our villages, it had the worst problem so we gave it our first priority to fix.”

“The problem we gave equal weightage was a system of drainage, another point we raised at the JDC, indeed we raised this point a tad bit more than other issues. Through the infrastructure building projects of the SUCCESS programme, we are building roads. Hence in our first and only JDC meeting so far, we hoped that by presenting our drainage/sewage problem to the government it would make their work easier since they have a clear target, and work would progress smoothly; they have given their assurances, hopefully everything will be built in time.”

Hameeda noted, “It is interesting, our villages have a male body of volunteers (Called 'Goat Sodar Sunder') who protest and take our demands to the government, they have met success, and housing schemes are part of what they have managed to bring to our communities. The

difference between their work and our 100% female organisations is that ours is bringing change at a faster rate. I think this is because of the way we organise ourselves and meet regularly.”

Hameeda recognised how great a task this might have been, smiling as she said, “It is an amazing fact that those of us who are directly affected by these problems, are now able to take them directly to the government, which is a huge achievement, one which the JDCs have accomplished.” Change can only be brought about through consistent effort at every level. Hameeda knows change is coming, she has seen it, and she is a part of it.





PEOPLE BEHIND SUCCESS



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Social Organisers (SOs) are a key part of the SUCCESS programme. Their lives link so many stories, but provide their own one as well. It is a journey intertwined with a great many others, this is a brief look at the story of Marvi.

Aged twenty-eight, she has been working at the NRSP since 2010, and has been a part of the SUCCESS programme since 2017. SUCCESS is her first time in the field. She has a mother and two brothers but is the family's breadwinner, after her father separated from them. She personally sees herself as enthusiastic, "I try and get involved in any work I see, it means the burden I carry at the workplace increases but how else do we learn and move forward?"

She comes to work from Thatta, which is where she also grew up; it takes half an

hour to get here. A single vehicle has to pick three SOs, and carry them from site to site; planning all this is a hassle and adds to the difficulty of what she does.

Simply getting there was a problem. Marvi recalls, "Previously when I worked at Thatta, I would not go to my workplace alone, my brothers would drop me off, working was a new experience in this regard and my family were reluctant to let me go. My brothers however, after seeing that I travelled with other women eased off. This at the very least is no longer a problem."

She adds, "Our DPO told me, that I do very good office work, but field work would push me. It was the first time I had done field work, and I treated it as a challenge, and looked forward to it. Still I had to learn, when we first went and I observed

my senior SO call out the women of the village and acquire information from them, I was amazed at her confidence.”

The men of these villages also prove to be a hindrance at times. Marvi explains, “We need to have sessions with them first; otherwise they would not allow their women to take part. There is a political barrier as well; local politicians want our reforms to come through their hands in order to make them more popular. We also disburse our policies according to the Poverty Scorecards of households, however these politicians want them distributed according to who supports them.”

Marvi related an example, “Once we were taking some females to a CMST, A man came forth with an axe, demanding to know how it was that the women in his household are getting loaded into a car. It had to be explained to him that this was part of the project that had already been communicated to the entire village and part of how change would come through community involvement such as this.”

Another problem they had to overcome included the predisposition of the locals

towards NGOs, “If you ask the villagers themselves they would tell you that previous NGOs had come, would note down their names and basic info, then leave without doing much further. This made people think that what we did was a waste of time, and it was only after seeing our policies in action did they change their tune.”

Marvi has come a long way. She says, “I had a love of learning, I wanted to do bachelors in commerce, when I was doing it in Thatta, only four girls used to go, but in my first year a flood hit the region, so many people had to come stay in the institution and so our classes were cancelled. In my second year, the problems persisted but NGOs started coming to help the flood victims, I joined one, and I feel everything I might have learned in commerce, I learned practically at work.”

“A big part of how I managed to balance keeping the house running and my education was through effective planning, and a stress on saving. No one in my family spends money carelessly,” beamed Marvi.



Social Organiser

Naila Bhatti

Thatta

Being a Social Organiser (SO) includes implementing theory, experiencing its faults and practically correcting them. For Naila Bhatti, being an SO was an enlightening journey, and all the ones she helped along the way reaped the fruits of her labour.

Her family comprises of three sisters and two brothers, her father is a government employee and mother is a homemaker. Her father is open-minded; he believes that if his children are allowed to step out into the world, only then would they understand how it works. Her father's support helped her quite a bit; she even acquired an MA in Sociology recently.

She has spent two years in National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), with this year being her third. She had previously worked in the Agha Khan Maternity New-born

Health Registry where she had to note down the health of those who had recently become mothers as well as their children; it was a two-year programme which included research on infant health and mortality in the region.

Before joining the SUCCESS programme, she had taken part in a few surveys, but the Community Organisation (CO), Village Organisation (VO) setup was one she was unaware of and surprised her upon starting her new job. Recalling her first days, she explains, "we would have a session explaining to us what a CO was and that we would go in the field to remote villages and create some. On site, the act of motivating the people of the village, gathering them, and explaining to them the benefits of being organised, was a huge ordeal. It took, I think four days to a week to organise my first CO."



To try and get as many as are willing is not enough. Often a fair portion of her time is spent coaxing people out of their homes and getting them to invest their time in the community project. Naila says, "In social mobilisation it is important to get everyone involved, as those who do not participate are those who in the long run get left behind. It is efficient to cover the entire village as it means less people have to come back to these areas to help those in need."

Initially people were not happy with what she was doing there. She explained, "They wondered what good social mobilisation would do, and after all, yes they were meeting one another, but doing not much else. Interventions such as Community Investment Funds (CIFs) took some time to arrive as the process which included identifying beneficiaries and organising the transfers of funds took a while."

So far, Naila has enjoyed working at the NRSP, "My job here is without hassle and straight to the point, there is no one who creates obstacles for us, rules are easy to understand, and there is freedom in how we go about our work." The way she interacts with people of varying ages,

professions, cultures and even religions means that a fixed pattern cannot be followed. This may seem complicated, but it allows her to gain invaluable experience.

Looking forward she wishes to continue working in the field. With her eager mind looking for alternative ways to improve the way she carries out her tasks, "I have done my bit of campaigning within the organisation to get each of us scooters, they are cheap enough that each of us can get one, and would enable us to work independently of one another. A single car has to pick and drop three SOs, this gets tricky when we are assigned different work sites. Work would be much more efficient if we each had a scooter, since we, women, cannot drive motorbikes. This seems like a simple solution, and we are not afraid, after all, we are the empowered women of Sujawal."

Naila will keep working and improving the lives of everyone she meets, her drive to thrive and her personality are sure to be more than a match for whatever obstacles the future holds.





District Program Officer

Muhammad Yousif

Sujawal

Every member of an organisation has a role, and just as a machine might not function without a crucial gear, the National Rural Support Programme's (NRSP) integral member within the SUCCESS programme in Sujawal, is Muhammad Yousif - the District Programme Officer of district Sujawal.

It is not a post handed lightly, Muhammad Yousif has the experience required, both in the development sector and within the NRSP. He had been in NRSP since 1998, being involved in various programmes such as being senior programme manager in Human Resource. The moment SUCCESS was initiated; it was decided that he was the right person to lead NRSP's operations in Sujawal. Initially, Sujawal and Thatta used to be the same districts but they were split into two

separate districts in 2013, and hence district Sujawal came under Muhammad Yousif.

Being involved at such an early stage, he also had to deal with certain problems that arise from any similar programme starting anew. The first thing he had to do after organising his offices and staff was identifying the people they would be helping, this meant conducting surveys via Poverty Score Cards (PSCs). He considers it his first big challenge in the programme, "The plan was for another organisation to do the scorecards, but ultimately it fell upon us to do so. It was so incredibly difficult, so technical; it was something we never could easily handle. It had to be done on tablets which would automatically send the information to a database; we did not know whether the information taken on the

tablets was accurate, or even what was in it since the information would be sent elsewhere.”

The need to keep things going according to schedule also proved trying; the reason being that no type of organisation is 100% efficient from inception. Instead, problems are eliminated over time as they are encountered, since they are often unforeseen. Muhammad Yousif adds, “Our budget was region based, everything had to fall within it, and we had to organise things trying to keep money on the side to deal with any issues we might run into, which we often did. It slowed everything down, so much so that the maturity period of the programme might have to be longer now.”

Knowing the political environment in the region was imperative, it was not something that could be taken on scorecards or evaluated, but came with experience. By making interventions through the Poverty Score Card's (PSC) ranking, the team was able to change the implementation trends in the area, which were influenced by political parties and landlords.

The other political parties were not in any way easier, “Whenever we worked in the villages, these different parties would come to us inquiring about our motive behind helping people from the other party and not theirs. Hence, this way, much of our time would be wasted, and we would also be pressurised towards doing things we might not have done otherwise, keeping everything on track was an astronomical task.”

People also tend to forget how difficult it is working at a rural setting. Muhammad Yousif provides an example, “there is a *Tehseel* called *Kharo Chan*, where there are no roads, no hospitals, no electricity, in fact, there is no basic infrastructure there at all. Problems of transport and communication mean that work in such areas is slow.”

Still progress goes well, Muhammad Yousif says, “Our targets are pretty much 95% done, especially in terms of social mobilisation. Other aspects of the programme go smoothly as well; 22 union councils have had CIF thus far.” As for the future, his advice is, “the best way to improve things in projects such as these is to fix them during the design stage.”

“We tell the communities that you are making your own government. We are giving you the knowhow and the funds to organise yourselves. We are giving you a means to communicate with the government; so that you can help direct your own futures. You are united, going forward you will surely grow in strength. Eventually you would not have to rely on anyone else to get the things you want.”

SUJAWAL 2016-18



99,872

Households Covered by
Poverty Scorecard Survey



63,397

Organised
Households



3,128

Women Community
Organisations (COs) Formed



350

Women Village
Organisations (VOs) Formed



37

Women Local Support
Organisations (LSOs) Formed



5,930

Women CO Members
who received CMST



755

Women VO/LSO Members
who received LMST



434

Community Resource
Persons (CRPs) Trained



19

LSOs/VOs with Community
Investment Fund (CIF)



2,369

Households Benefiting
from CIF



32 million

Amount of CIF (PKR) given to
LSOs/VOs



52,683

Women Insured



57,532

Men Insured



16,176

Households Insured through
Micro Health Insurance



2

Community Physical Infrastructures
(CPIs) Completed



12.6 million

Cost of CPIs (PKR)



2,489

Households benefiting
from CPIs



3.5 million

Cost of Income Generating
Grants (IGG) (PKR)



281

Households Benefiting
from IGG



23

Village Organisations (VOs)
Benefiting from IGG



454

Beneficiaries of Technical and
Vocational Skills Training (TVST)



EUROPEAN UNION

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