



Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme

SUCCESS is funded by the European Union



# Tajikistan: Experience Sharing and Learning Visit Report

September 23<sup>rd</sup> - October 03<sup>rd</sup> 2018



# **Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) programme**

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## Acknowledgement

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We are very thankful for the planning, effort and time spent by all focal persons and their par excellence hospitality to make this trip for our partners from the province of Sindh a pleasant and truly enriching experience by visiting various Village Organisations (VOs) and Social Unions for the Development of Village Organisations SUDVOs (LSOs), and experiencing the work they have done over the last 20 years with an opportunity to ask questions and learn lessons.

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## CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DAY ONE – SEPTEMBER 24, 2018.....</b>	<b>5</b>
BRIEFING MEETING AT CHAIKHANA RAHAT .....	5
MEETING WITH AGA KHAN FOUNDATION AKF, DUSHANBE.....	5
VISIT TO HISAAR FORT .....	6
<b>DAY TWO – SEPTEMBER 25, 2018.....</b>	<b>7</b>
TRAVEL TO KHOROG, GBAO .....	7
<b>DAY THREE – SEPTEMBER 26, 2018 .....</b>	<b>7</b>
BRIEFING AT AKF/MSDSP OFFICE KHOROG .....	7
MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT OF GBAO .....	8
MEETING WITH SHUGNON DISTRICT GOVERNOR .....	8
VISIT TO PORSHINEV, SHUGNON DISTRICT .....	9
VISIT TO PIR NASIR KHUSRAW CHASHMA .....	10
<b>DAY FOUR – SEPTEMBER 27, 2018.....</b>	<b>10</b>
VISIT TO ISHKOSHIM DISTRICT, JAMOAT ANDROB, DISTRICT .....	10
VISIT TO ROSHTKALA DISTRICT, JAMOAT TEVDEM .....	11
DINNER HOSTED BY AKF/MSDSP TAJIKISTAN .....	13
<b>DAY FIVE – SEPTEMBER 28, 2018.....</b>	<b>13</b>
VISIT TO NISIM GUND SUDVO OFFICE, JAMOAT NOVOBOD, SHUGNON DISTRICT .....	13
VISIT TO VILLAGE ORGANISATION (VO) SIJD, JAMOAT NOVOBOD, SHUGNON DISTRICT.....	14
VISIT TO UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA, KHOROG .....	15
DINNER HOSTED BY RSPN/RSPs FOR AKF/MSDSP KHOROG .....	16
<b>DAY SIX – SEPTEMBER 29, 2018.....</b>	<b>17</b>
VISIT TO BOTANICAL GARDEN .....	17
<b>DAY SEVEN – SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 .....</b>	<b>18</b>
TRAVEL TO DUSHANBE FROM KHOROG .....	18
<b>DAY EIGHT – OCTOBER 01, 2018.....</b>	<b>19</b>
DEBRIEFING SESSION AT AKF/MSDSP OFFICE, DUSHANBE .....	19
<b>DAY NINE – OCTOBER 02, 2018 .....</b>	<b>19</b>
VISIT TO INGO, CARITAS SWITZERLAND IN TAJIKISTAN, DUSHANBE .....	19
<b>QUESTIONS BY THE TEAM TO AKF/MSDSP AND MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>KEY LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE SHARING VISIT TO TAJIKISTAN AND RELEVANCE TO SINDH:</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK BY TEAM MEMBERS.....</b>	<b>23</b>

## Acronyms

AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
ARP	Agricultural Reform Programme
CBSGs	Community-Based Savings Groups
Cis	Community Institutions
CIF	Community Investment Fund
CO	Community Organisation
CPI	Community Physical Infrastructure
CDD	Community-driven Development
EU	European Union
GBAO	Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
GoS	Government of Sindh
HAP	Humanitarian Assistance Programme
INGOs	International Non-governmental Organisations
IGG	Income Generating Grants
LSO	Local Support Organisation
LSO-N	Local Support Organisation – Network
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
MAP	Monitoring Action Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHI	Micro Health Insurance
MLOs	Micro-Lending Organisations
MIP	Micro Investment Plan
MSDSP	Mountain Societies Development Support Programme
NRSP	National Rural Support Programme
PM	Programme Manager
RSPs	Rural Support Programmes
RSPN	Rural Support Programmes Network
SRSO	Sindh Rural Support Organization
SUCCESS	Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support
SM	Social Mobilisation
SO	Social Organizer
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SUDVOs	Social Unions for the Development of Village Organisations
TVST	Technical and Vocational Skill Training
TRDP	Thardeep Rural Development Programme
UC	Union Council
UCDP	Union Council Development Plan
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialists Republic
VDP	Village Development Plan
VDF	Village Development Fund
VMP	Village Management Planning
VO	Village Organisation
VOP	Village Organisation Programme
VTP	Vocational Training Programme
WASH	Water Sanitation & Hygiene

## **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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## OVERVIEW

This report documents the reflections, feedback and learning from the exposure visit to Tajikistan organised by the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) with the financial support of European Union under the 'Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) Programme'. Tajikistan was selected as a destination of experience sharing and learning visit due to its experience of working with the community institutions nurtured by the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP) of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). The concept of Community Driven Development (CDD) through social mobilisation was introduced in Tajikistan in 1998 by AKF/MSDSP and this was adapted from the approach and work of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) of Pakistan.

The delegation comprised 11 members from respective RSPs and from Government of Sindh's Planning and Development Department. This visit was organised by the RSPN with facilitation from AKF/MSDSP from September 23<sup>rd</sup> to October 03<sup>rd</sup>, 2018.

This visit provided the opportunity to the participants to observe the working of community institutions in the rural parts of Tajikistan with an aim to learn lessons for improving their own work in Pakistan. The community institutions in rural Tajikistan have been working for the last 20 years. The day by day details of the visit are now given below:

## DAY ONE – SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

### Briefing Meeting at Chaikhana Rahat



The 11-member delegation reached Chaikhana Rahat, Dushanbe, on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Sep 2018 at 12:30 pm. On behalf of RSPN, Mr. Khaleel Tetlay, Chief Operating Officer RSPN, warmly welcomed the visiting team from Sindh province of Pakistan. He introduced the team with AKF staff to get acquainted with one another. Further, he briefed to the participants about the objectives of the visit to Tajikistan. The COO, based on his previous experience of working in Tajikistan, emphasised four major aspects to focus during this visit:

1. How the process of social mobilisation, interest groups, SUDVOs (Social Union for the Development of Village Organisations (LSO), ASUDVOs (Association of SUDVOs) and VOs (Village Organisations) have contributed in the empowerment of rural women.
2. How social mobilisation is leading to improvements in social sectors (health and education).
3. How SUDVOs and VOs are collaborating with the government departments.
4. What arrangements community institutions have made to ensure their sustainability?

He further elaborated the importance of the visit and said, “We have come here to learn

from the experiences of Tajik development programmes and to share our experiences of Sindh Union Council and Community Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) programme.”

### Meeting with Aga Khan Foundation AKF, Dushanbe



The delegation paid a visit to the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Tajikistan office. The delegation was welcomed with open arms by the AKF staff. In the meeting, Mr. Koshif Rijabekov (Civil Society Officer AKF) gave a detailed presentation and informed that AKF initiated its work in Tajikistan in 1993 when it saw the deplorable situation of famine-like in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast/Region (GBAO), owing to the fall of the Soviet Union and the civil war. To implement relief efforts, AKF had set up the Pamir Relief and Development Programme (PRDP). With the support of the Government and the international community, AKF/PRDP launched a major operation to provide humanitarian relief to the beleaguered population of GBAO. Soon AKF/PRDP launched the Agriculture Reform Programme (ARP) that led to the privatisation of state farms. With the provision of training and new agricultural inputs, the local agricultural production grew manifold. In 1997, the Government of Tajikistan requested



AKF to expand its operations to the Rasht Valley in the eastern part of the country. This led to the renaming of PRDP to Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP). In the first half of 1998, AKF/MSDSP sent two team members to AKRSP Pakistan's Chitral Region for three months. Then in the summer of 1998, the three-member AKRSP team visited AKF/MSDSP to devise a strategy for social mobilisation.

With the adoption of the strategy, AKF/MSDSP a major player in the implementation of high standard projects involving long term commitment and community driven approach. AKF/MSDSP continues to mobilise the communities to participate in socio-economic development measures responsive to their developmental needs. This platform has grown into a wide network of self-governance structures at the village, sub-district and district levels with local saving groups, economic associations, pasture and water management committees, and health and education promoters.

Mr. Koshif Rijabekov also talked about the main goals of the Aga Khan Foundation including the creation of economic and employment opportunities, strengthening civil society institutions, promoting sustainable natural resource management and developing and investing in social services sustained by communities, strengthening local civil society institutions and improving local governance.

He further mentioned the major areas of AKF interventions that included:

1. Agriculture and food security
2. Economic inclusion
3. Early childhood development
4. Health and nutrition
5. Civil society

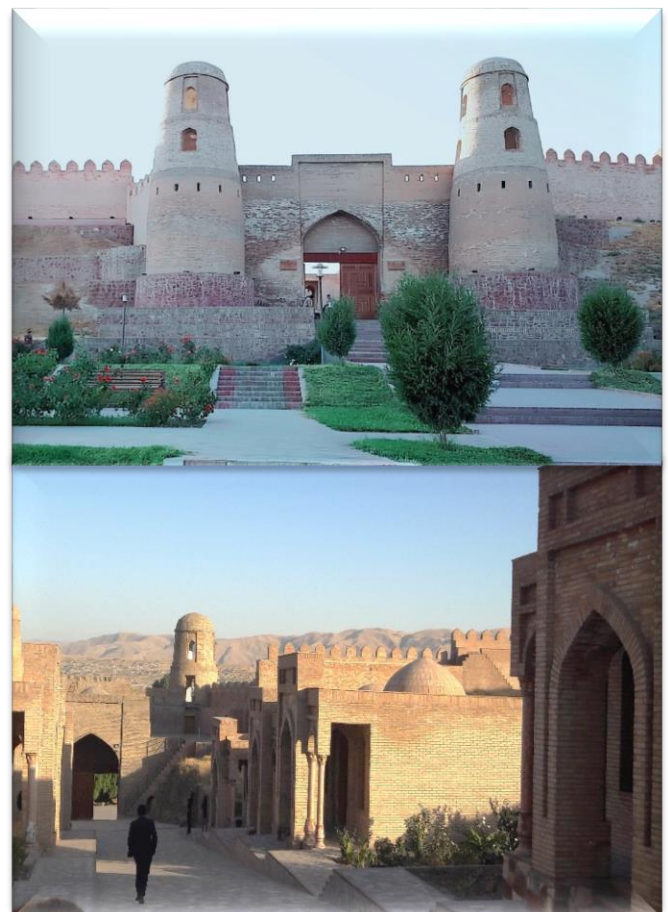
Later, it was informed that VOs are registered with Jamoats as self-governing bodies. The registered bodies are called 'Makamaat e Khudfalyet Jaamavee' (MKJ). Elected head of

VO/MKJ is also a member of the Jamoat council (Jamoat is a sub-district, but more akin to Pakistan's Union Council given the smaller size of mountain districts).

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Khaleel Tetlay presented the souvenir of Sindhi Ajrak and cap to AKF staff.

## Visit to Hissar Fort

After the meeting with AKF, the participants travelled 30 kilometres from Dushanbe city to visit Hissar fort which is a famous historical and archaeological site of Tajikistan.



## DAY TWO – SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

### Travel to Khorog, GBAO



On 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 2018, the participants left Dushanbe early in the morning by road for Khorog, GBAO. An informal meeting took place at Kulyob with Mr. Kishwar Abdulalishoev, General Manager AKF/MSDSP, Tajikistan, who welcomed the delegation and had breakfast with all the team members. The delegation arrived at Kalai Khumb, Darvaz district, and had lunch. After having lunch and a brief stopover, the delegation left for Khorog, GBAO. The team reached Khorog at 9 p.m.

## DAY THREE – SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

### Briefing at AKF/MSDSP Office Khorog



The delegation reached at the office of AKF/MSDSP, Khorog and was welcomed by the Regional Programme Manager of AKF/MSDSP, Mr. Khujamyor Khumorikov, who briefed the guests and gave a detailed presentation. He informed the delegation that after the

humanitarian relief and Agriculture Reform Programme, in 1998 AKF/MSDSP changed its strategy and began the social mobilisation programme to allow the people to set the agenda through their own community institutions. AKF/MSDSP is working in all seven districts of GBAO. It has established 443 Village Organisations, 41 SUDVOs and 6 ASUDVOs. The AKF/MSDSP focuses on increasing rural incomes and employment by fostering development of micro and small enterprises, facilitating access to capital and business development services, promoting cross border trade and connecting small holders, small producer groups<sup>1</sup> and linkages with market, improving access to social infrastructure, disaster risk reduction and agriculture and natural resource management. He further informed the participants about the ongoing AKF/MSDSP projects that include:

1. Food security and nutrition project
2. Wakhan Ultra-Poor Support Project II
3. Creating Opportunities in Safe Environment (COSE II) Project
4. Construction of Family Medicine Centres
5. Construction of Bore Holes
6. To facilitate mainstreaming Village Economic Groups (Institutional platform of participatory governance to foster solutions built upon traditional knowledge, the culture of innovations, revitalizations of cultural expression and active youth engagement in Bio-cultural diversity work.)

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Khaleel Tetlay presented the souvenir of Sindhi Ajrak and cap to MSDSP staff.

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<sup>1</sup> key steps (trainings) in building capacity among small holders to identify market opportunities.

## Meeting with Government of GBAO



After the briefing at the AKF/MSDSP office, the delegation moved to attend a meeting with Ms. Amirbekzoda Zazira, Deputy Governor of GBAO at the Hukumat office, Khorog. Mr. Khaleel Tetlay introduced the delegation with her and briefed about the purpose of visit to Khorog. The Deputy Governor welcomed all the members of the delegation to Tajikistan and informed them that GBAO suffered a lot during the civil war as it produced only 10 percent of its food from 1991 to 1997. After the civil war, the Central and GBAO Governments along with AKF/MSDSP focused on land privatisation and agricultural development and now GBAO produces about 70 percent of its food. She further added that GBAO comprises of three percent of the total population of Tajikistan but 43 percent of the total area of Tajikistan, and over 98% of this is high mountain area.

In the meeting Mr. Mohammad Kashif, Planning Officer P&D Department, Government of Sindh, informed the Deputy Governor GBAO about the commitment of the Government of Sindh for the social and economic development of the province with focus on poverty reduction through community driven local development. He further elaborated the concept of rural growth centres as envisioned in the new Poverty Reduction Strategy prepared by the Technical Assistance (TA) team under the SUCCESS Programme. Moreover, the Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) for the Reduction of Stunting and Malnutrition in Sindh was also discussed by Mr. Mohammad Kashif.

The Deputy Governor thanked Mr. Kashif for his updates on the Government of Sindh's efforts. The Government of Tajikistan's own focus is also on improving the socio-economic conditions of the people, with a focus on women's rights and inclusion in the development process. She further added that the government of Tajikistan has a new strategy to improve the quality of life and build an agro-industrial society where technology is used to add value to economic activities. The Tajik government is also interested to establish the free economic zones for the promotion of industrial development. Mr. Khaleel Tetlay extended gratitude to her precious time and hospitality. Ms. Samina, SRSO presented her the souvenir of Sindhi Ajrak and cap.



## Meeting with Shugnon District Governor



Mr. Khaleel Tetlay led the delegation to the Shugnon District Government Office for meeting with the District Governor, Mr. Giyozoda Aziz and introduced the delegation with him and informed about the purpose of the visit to Tajikistan.

Mr. Giyozoda Aziz warmly welcomed the delegation and gave a detailed briefing about the history of Tajikistan, i.e. its civil war and how it came out of it. He informed the delegation that Tajikistan came into being on September 09, 1991 and in 1992 civil war broke out which crippled the economic condition of Tajikistan. The country suffered from the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its after-effects. The Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast/Region (GBAO) suffered more than the other regions. The largest geographical region of the country is GBAO with the smallest proportion of the population. After independence and economic collapse, the support from Moscow and Dushanbe dried up, particularly the food imports that caused a famine-like situation. It was the reason that the government of Tajikistan requested the international community for humanitarian support. The Aga Khan Foundation was the first organisation which responded to the appeal and it was a hard time for the people of Tajikistan who were in dire need of getting food to avoid the food starvation. In this way, Tajikistan came out of this hard situation.

The Governor further said that government is open and welcomes everyone. Similarly, he added that the focus of government is on agriculture and enterprise development. He also opined that the government has taken numerous steps for the empowerment of women. Further, he stated that the government follows the bottom-up planning approach that indicates the development plans emanating from the UC level, district, region/province and lastly, at a national level. While discussing the district hierarchy, he informed the participants that there is a Governor in every district who is the in-charge of government at the district level and each governor has an economic and social advisor. Moreover, he said that VOs and SUDVOs have brought positive results as it is evident from the progress being made in GBAO over the past 20 years.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Dittal Kalhoro, CEO SRSO, presented him a souvenir of Sindhi Ajrak and cap. On this, Mr. Giyozoda Aziz thanked him and presented the traditional souvenir of colourful Pamiri socks to all the members of the delegation.

### Visit to Porshinev, Shugnon District



The delegation went to a meeting at Porshinev with community groups (formed under VO) running enterprises with the support of AKF/MSDSP. Women members of these groups make different type of processed fruit and vegetables to sell them in the local market, as well as in Murghab town, some 250 km away (This town is the only major locality of the Murghab Plateau. People's livelihood is depended on livestock. On high altitude, fruit and vegetable production does not take place). While the women were quite satisfied with their existing efforts in processing business, they wanted to 'upgrade' to a semi-industrial level. Women members articulated that if a proper fruit and vegetable processing unit was established, the volume of products could be expanded as well as ensuring standard quality. One member said, "Since I have become engaged in fruit processing I can afford properly for the education of my children. Now I can buy warm clothes for them and feed them properly."

The name of this Village Organisation was Buvud and its head was Fayroz Doyor. This VO was formed in 1998 with 151 members.



The delegation also met with the members of Community Based Savings Group (CBSG) namely Zebo. The CBSG has an annual plan. The members of the savings group meet every fortnight. At the meetings, members contribute to the social fund, save, collect repayments, and make new loans. Small loans are provided for productive, social and emergency purposes. At the end of the year, the plan is closed, and all funds are returned to members, and then a new plan is devised. With the funds received, members undertake various activities to improve their lives and livelihoods.

At the end of the meeting, Ms. Sultana, RSPN presented a souvenir of Sindhi Ajrak and cap to the members of CBSG.

### Visit to Pir Nasir Khusraw Chashma



The delegation visited the Pir Nasir Khusraw Chashma in Porshinev.

## DAY FOUR – SEPTEMBER 27, 2018

### Visit to Ishkoshim District, Jamoat Androb



The delegation departed for the Ishkoshim district and arrived at Jamoat/union council Androb. Deputy of Androb Jamoat welcomed the delegation and informed that there are 8 villages, 380 households, 9 Village Organisations and around 3,000 population of this sub-district. One room in the Jamoat office complex has been given to SUDVO Androb.

He further told the participants that they have developed five years' development plan for the Jamoat which has 74 projects with an estimated cost of 150 million Somonis. This plan was developed by a working group which included all the representatives of different sectors at the Jamoat level, including VOs. Many of the self-help and smaller projects have been initiated. For the large projects, the central and provincial governments have to play their roles. On social sector, he said that there is one hospital in Jamoat and three medical points. The hospital lacks specialists. The Deputy Head of Jamoat said that with the setting up of VOs and SUDVOs, there is an increased collaboration and cooperation between local authority and communities. The VOs are now registered with Jamoat as 'Makamaat e Khudfalyet Jaamavee' (MKJ) and heads of VOs are now members of Jamoat council and work very closely with the head of Jamoat. Communities and Jamoat jointly plan and undertake various events including national, cultural and sport events. Through Jamoat, CIs have access to the district

authorities. Jamoat Head visits villages and attends the VO meetings. This provides him an opportunity to directly interact with community members in an organised and transparent manner. At times of various vaccination campaigns, all work together to support Community Health Promoters to ensure 100% vaccination of pregnant mothers and young children. He concluded by saying that the arrival of the mobile telephone technology has also contributed to bring the CIs and Jamoats closer to each other; now everybody is readily accessible, and this contributes to solving many local issues. The Deputy Head of Jamoat said that women in Tajikistan and in GBAO have equal rights. They are active both at home and in society. Many of the local shops (as well as in Khorog Bazaar) are owned and managed by women. Most of the household income comes from agriculture, livestock and remittances from Russia. Parent-Teacher Committees at school level are active and working well. Parents involvement in school affairs is important both for the school as well as for the pupils. It is mandatory for all the students to get compulsory education till class IX.

The participants, after that, visited wool processing workshop where the women folk produced different goods with the latest machinery. The project was initially supported by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and housed in a private building. Later the Jamoat allocated land and the CIs constructed a purpose-built building to house the project. Local Cashmere wool is collected, processed and turned into local products, e.g. caps, scarves, shawls, etc. Tourists visiting Androb buy these items and some are also sent to Khorog Bazaar for sale.

At the end of the visit, Mr. Parvez Ahmed Chandio, Director UCBPRP P&D Government of Sindh, presented Sindhi Ajrak and cap to the Deputy Head of Jamoat Androb.

After visiting the wool workshop, the delegation visited the office of head of SUDVO

Androb who said that over the past 15 years, Village Organisations have become recognised institutions and they not only contribute to maintain peace and harmony at the village level but also undertake active part in the village development activities. Further, they are registered, and it also support Jamoat for mobilization of people for undertaking collective efforts, e.g. sporting activities, cleanliness drives, national and cultural celebrations, etc.



### Visit to Roshtkala District, Jamoat Tevdem



After the visit to Jamoat Androb, the delegation travelled to Roshtkala district. There is Jamoat Tevdem, in village Bartevedem, the delegation

met with the members of Community Based Saving Group (CBSG). The participants witnessed the proceedings of the saving group. The saving group was managed by a five-member management committee. Each member had a pass book and he or she could buy a maximum of five share with each share of 20 Somonis.



In four months, the saving group had collected 7000 Somonis out of which 6000 Somonis was given to the members at an interest rate of 2% per month while the remaining 1000 Somonis was deposited in the bank. At the end of the year the profit would be equally shared among the participants based on their shares. The maximum tenure of the loan was 50 weeks.

Mr. Nadeem Shah, Taluka Coordinator (TRDP) commented, "I learnt that members of VO have one box for keeping the money of saving which had three locks and three keys with three members. This was a new thing for me that I will practice in my organisation back in Sindh with the approval of high management."

After this, the delegation moved to the VO Ustad Mohammad Nasir. Head of VO informed the delegation that social mobilization started in Tajikistan in the year 1998. After independence, the subsequent civil war created many issues for the people of Tajikistan thus necessitating the need of strong VOs where people could work together to solve their issues. Therefore, social mobilization became inevitable. Initially, the membership fee was 0.5 Somoni per month but with the passage time as things got better it increased to 1.5 Somonis.

Further, he went on saying that all the money collected by the VO is used with the consent of the people on education, health, irrigation issues. With the help of the Government and AKF/MSDSP, the VOs overcome many of their pressing problems. He added that his VO also helped a poor family in the village whose family member was sick and went to Dushanbe for the treatment but could not survive, therefore, this VO arranged a fare of the vehicle to bring the dead body of the person. He also informed that their VO resolves the conflicts taking place in the village and removes the snow debris from the roads during the snowfall season. He said that now the VO does not depend on support from the MSDSP as it is now self-reliant and independent. This VO also motivated 95% of the households of the village to put in place new roofs (metal sheets).



The delegation also visited Village Organisation (VO) Bartavdem, district Roshtkala and saw the fruit processing activity. The members of VO (Men and women) were producing apple juice for sale. The delegation was also offered the apple juice. The participants appreciated the work of this VO. Ms. Fozia, DPO NRSP, gave souvenir of Sindhi Ajrak and cap to the community members.

After this, the team members travelled to the village Khidorjev to visit Village Organisation (VO) Khidorjev in the same district. Head of the VO informed the delegation that AKF/MSDSP provided project of fruit processing. AKF/MSDSP funded three fruit storage rooms to this VO, one of them costs 5000 dollars and two others cost 700 dollars each.

The name of the group is Khiromon which consists of 16 members and it was formed in 2012. There is also a room to dry the fruit to prepare jam for selling in the market. Another member of the VO added further that last year, income from apple juice sales was 14716 Somonis. Other fruit processing income last year was 6500 Somonis. In addition to it, 5000 kg of fresh apples worth 15000 Somonis were sold. Now, fruit processing is becoming an important source of income for the interest group members.



### **Dinner hosted by AKF/MSDSP Tajikistan**

The delegation attended the dinner hosted by AKF/MSDSP Tajikistan. Mr. Khujamyor Khumorikov, Regional Programme Manager, welcomed the delegation and Mr. Khaleel Tetley also extended gratitude to the staff of the AKF/MSDSP for the arrangements of the dinner. At the end of the event, souvenirs were presented by AKF/MSDSP to all the members of the delegation.

### **DAY FIVE – SEPTEMBER 28, 2018**

### **Visit to Nisim Gund SUDVO Office, Jamoat Novobod, Shugnon District**

The delegation visited Nisim Gund SUDVO office, sub-district Navobod, district Shugnon and it was welcomed by the chairman of Jamoat, Mr. Kirgizbegov Kirgiz, who informed the team that this SUDVO was established in 2006. There are 52 members of the general body of this SUDVO and 22 are the members of its executive committee. It has three

committees, economic, education and agriculture. Through this SUDVO, 11 villages have been provided with drinking water scheme.

This SUDVO has health project through which it has established one health unit in the Jamoat and four medical units, but the people face the challenge of unavailability of a specialist. While in emergency cases, the doctor is called for the treatment. When a patient comes to the medical point he/she has to deposit 400 Somonis for the treatment. He also informed that VO members saved a good amount of money up to 33000 Somonis. There are 34 saving groups in the Jamoat which have a saving more than 100,000 Somonis. There are 85 percent women members in saving groups who save money for lending and after one year distribute the profit of saving among all the members. The members who borrow the money, 40 percent of borrowers use the loan for the local business. He further informed that if you visit any market here you will notice that 80 percent of women run the shops. Women also make traditional things like socks, caps, bed sheets, pillow sheets and bags.

Other 60 percent members use that amount to meet the basic needs of education, food, clothing and health. The members of this SUDVO save money for medical, education and social fund to help the VO. People also send money to SUDVO from other countries as a fund. This SUDVO has saved 85000 Somonis and prepared to meet natural disaster or health disaster mitigation in future.

He added that a school was closed here due to lack of resources then SUDVO collected money from the members in the social fund to reopen it. A child also dropped out of school due to fees issue which was later paid by the SUDVO to re-enrol him.

He further informed that if you had come to visit this SUDVO 10 years ago then you would have seen a weak position of it in terms of saving and interest of people but now it has



sustained to save a good amount of money and undertook different projects from which people are benefiting. In this regard, AKF and MSDSP continue to support them. This SUDVO is also registered with the government, that's why people's trust level has increased.

He informed the delegation about the audit at the SUDVO level is also conducted by the commission. Some of the VOs have also developed the health and education emergency funds and helped in the renovation of the elementary schools.

Vocational training was found missing by the members of the delegation. Similarly, it was proposed by Mr. Muhammad Kashif Khoso, that on the pattern of health emergency fund, education fund should also be developed through which the meritorious students of the village may be supported for higher studies in Dushanbe or Khorog.



### **Visit to Village Organisation (VO) Sijd, Jamoat Novobod, Shugnon District**

Later, the team members travelled to visit VO Sijd, sub-district Navobod, district Shugnon. Head of the VO, Saidmamodov Buldast welcomed the delegation and informed that after civil war, the socio-economic system was collapsed due to which people of this area held a meeting and decided that if they do not get organised then they might not be able to meet the new challenges and to realise the new opportunities that are bound to come. Therefore, everyone agreed to set up the village organisation. The purpose of this VO

was to provide the facility of education, health and infrastructure. At that time, the condition of people was deplorable, despite it, they gave 0.5 Somoni as membership fees and now it has increased to 1.5 Somonis.

In a month, VO calls a meeting in which it is decided that where to use the money, whether for education or health purpose. Initially, this VO faced a lot of challenges because of lack of funds, so, to make it sustainable, it needed funds or projects. The AKF/MSDSP and government, over the years, collaborated and supported the VO due to which many issues have been solved. In 2003, this VO was registered with the government, because of it, now this VO can work with other organisations too. This VO has seven saving groups.



He further informed that there are 156 households in the village and its population is about 1050. There was a big problem of irrigation of land. AKF/MSDSP made a need assessment of the village and signed terms of partnership (ToP) with the community for a project of irrigation water. In this regard, AKF/MSDSP provided money and VO provided the labour. This project started in 2001 and ended in 2002.

The pipeline is working well but some of it needs to be repaired for which VO has given application to a few organisations for the support. Now 36 houses have been built and 60 hectares of land has been irrigated. Still more water is required to raise the crops as per the potential of the land. This agricultural land

belongs to government authority which has distributed among the farmers as per their household members.

He further briefed the delegation that initially seeds used to be given by the AKF/MSDSP and the quality of crop production was good. Now, seeds are provided by the government and due to this the quality of crop production has decreased. However, with the support of the government, the VO has conducted a lot of development programmes. There is also a health committee for saving money to help the people during the time of emergency. This is done with the support of the Aga Khan Health Services. Over 30 times, patients were taken to Khorog for emergency treatment using this fund. There is a big issue of migration that around 300 to 320 young men from the village have left for Russia and got its citizenship. Mr. Pervez Ahmed Chandio, Director P & D, Government of Sindh, said, "I have observed that due to migration, the women folk of Pamir region are overburdened but their role is remarkable as they are sharing 70% of income from their income generating activities for their household that was fabulous altogether."

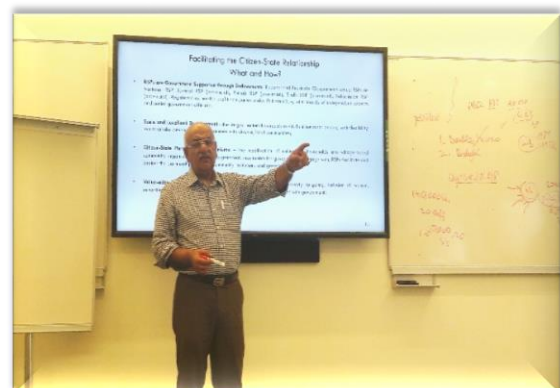
He added that VO will sustain because everyone has realized the importance of its existence as it is the need of the hour. At the same time, people think that if they do not work in the VO then it will be dormant and will not be included in the government planning. Therefore, the people are more interested to work in the VO and take some necessary steps to solve their problems. He quoted an example of a household in the village whose members are mentally ill. The VO helps them irrigate their land and provided them fund for the construction of their house.

He also informed that in the Russian tenure, the planning used to be top-down and now it is bottom-up which consists of five years' plan. At the end of the meeting, Mr. Kashif, P&D Govt. of Sindh, gave the souvenir of Sindhi Ajrak and cap to the head of VO.

## Visit to University of Central Asia, Khorog



The delegation went to the University of Central Asia (UCA) and it was warmly welcomed by the administration of University of Central Asia. In 2018, two students of UCA had worked for RSPN/NRSP as summer interns. All the members of the team were taken to the different sections of university and finally guided for the lecture hall where Ms. Shabana Manji welcomed the delegation and introduced the delegation with the students sitting in the hall. Mr. Khaleel Tetlay then gave a detailed presentation about the RSPs in Pakistan.



He particularly highlighted the role of the Government of Sindh and the European Union in scaling up CDD across the whole province of Sindh.

He mentioned ahead the purpose of the visit to Tajikistan. A few students asked the questions regarding the internship at RSPN and its upcoming projects.

### **Dinner Hosted by RSPN/RSPs for AKF/MSDSP Khorog**

Mr. Khaleel Tetlay welcomed all the guests and thanked them for their time, care and support for the visit. After the dinner, souvenirs were distributed among the guests of MSDSP.



## DAY SIX – SEPTEMBER 29, 2018

### Visit to Botanical Garden

The team members travelled to visit Botanical Garden and then headed towards market for the shopping.



## DAY SEVEN – SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

### Travel to Dushanbe from Khorog

The delegation under the leadership of Mr. Khaleel Tetlay left Khorog for the Dushanbe early in the morning. Reaching at Kalai Khumb, town, lunch was served to the delegation where Mr Khaleel Tetley introduced the members of the team to Mr. Rehmat Khuda, first Social Organiser of Darvaz District. Mr Rehmat Khuda shared an interesting old story with the team members.



He said that 20 years ago, women folk was given training about the making of Samosas (sandwiches) to sell them in the market. After training women prepared Samosas and started selling them but a very small quantity was sold out on the first day and rest of it could not be sold. Then the women went to the AKF/MSDSP office and asked Mr Rehmat Khuda to purchase the remaining Samosas. He purchased all the Samosas and encouraged them to continue the activity. After a long span of time, the social organiser visited them in the market to purchase Samosas, but he was taken aback to see that there was no Samosa left for him because all of them were sold out. Mr Rehmat Khuda also mentioned that over the years, the local Kalai Khumb market has come to be dominated by women entrepreneurs and that several women's enterprises have grown much larger and now some women are involved in importing goods from China and Kyrgyzstan. Over the past 20 years, women's role in enterprise ownership and management has increased manifold.



## DAY EIGHT – OCTOBER 01, 2018

### Debriefing Session at AKF/MSDSP Office, Dushanbe



It was a debriefing session at AKF office, the delegation shared the experiences focusing on women's empowerment, income generating activities, health, education, collaboration with local government and sustainability. At the end



of the debriefing session, souvenirs of Sindhi Ajrak and cap were presented to the AKF staff.

## DAY NINE – OCTOBER 02, 2018

### Visit to INGO, CARITAS Switzerland in Tajikistan, Dushanbe



The delegation visited the CARITAS, INGO office, at Dushanbe. Mr. Shinan Kassam, Country Director, warmly welcomed all the team members. He gave a detailed presentation in which he highlighted a few points that include:

- i. CARITAS is engaged in Tajikistan since 1996
- ii. Focuses on Muminabod district since 2000.
- iii. Expansion into eastern Khatlon in 2014

Its projects and activities include:

- i. Energy Efficiency
- ii. Entrepreneurship and Mass Production
- iii. Efficiency vs Multi-functionality
- iv. Forest Inventory Based on Sound Scientific Practice
- v. Joint Forest Management
- vi. Sustainable Agriculture Systems
- vii. Awareness Raising

Its key mitigation activities include:

- i. A combination of biological and ecological concepts to reduce or control erosion, protect soil and stabilise slopes
- ii. Multi-purpose plantations
- iii. Small scale mitigation infrastructure
- iv. Social fencing approach

Participatory assessment of climate and disaster risk:

- i. Hazard maps
- ii. Seasonal calendar
- iii. Vulnerability Matrix
- iv. Hazard/impact/coping strategies
- v. Adaptation strategy

Integrated watershed management:

- i. Multi-purpose agroforestry plantations
- ii. Pasture management and sustainable land use management

Response to institutional deficiencies:

- i. Move away from Soviet norms in land use management
- ii. Reduce the frequency and impact of natural disasters
- iii. Food insecurity
- iv. Systems for knowledge generation and equitable access
- v. Gender

## **QUESTIONS BY THE TEAM TO AKF/MSDSP AND MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS**

- **How SUDVO is involved in the Government planning and what about the coordination of Community Institutions with the government?**

A. The issues of VOs go to SUDVOs and it shares with the ASUDVO to inform the government regarding the issue in order to resolve it. Thus, it shows that SUDVO is in a close coordination with the government and involves itself in the planning as the government uses the bottom-up approach to prepare the planning. The government owns the Community Institutions (CIs) and has brought these institutions into the mainstream development planning of the country. Therefore, the ownership of these community institutions by the government can be realised after visiting the offices of SUDVOs and ASUDVOs in government sub-district buildings.

- **What is the role of AKF/MSDSP and government to resolve the major issues of migration and unemployment?**

A. The government of Tajikistan is planning to establish the industries to create employment opportunities for the people so that they do not migrate from Tajikistan to Russia. In addition, there are different organisations which are working on issues of migrants. AKF/MSDSP is also providing and engaging communities with skills trainings to encourage the small local business for earning a good amount of money instead of migrating to another country.

- **What is the mechanism of record keeping of VO and SUDVO?**

A. VOs and SUDVOs quarterly prepare reports and share with each other. Through this activity, both VOs and SUDVOs come to know about each other's activities. In this way, record keeping is maintained.

- **When MSDSP organises community into three tier social mobilisation, how it identifies the poor household?**

A. Normally, all village households are mobilised to become part of VO. Since the registration of VOs as MKJ, household coverage is over 95%. During the preparation of the Village Management Plan, a wealth ranking exercise is undertaken, and all households are ranked relatively. In this manner, the poorest households are identified. Some of the AKF/MSDSP interventions are at the broader community level, e.g. irrigation scheme, and some are targeted at the poorest households, e.g. provision of income generating asset grants. For the latter, wealth ranking listing is used. The Government of Tajikistan has also launched its social protection programme to support the poorest households. Therefore, wealth ranking lists are also shared with the

government to reach a consensus on the poorest of the poor. Recently, AKF/MSDSP has launched its nutrition programme in high altitude Jamoats. AKF/MSDSP, VOs/SUDVOs and Jamoat authorities together identified the poorest of poor for targeted support.

- **How are the savings of CBSGs utilised?**

- Under the Tajikistan law, 'mutual assistance' can be provided by groups. This law opened the path for setting up of CBSGs. 15-20 VO members get together and agree to mutually support each other through CBSG. At the beginning of the CBSG year, members agree on setting up a social fund for support to poor and for meeting emergency needs, amount each member to save, policy for mutual loaning, the rate of interest on these loans, and how at the end of the year the capital and profit will be shared. At each fortnightly meeting, members donate agreed amount to the social fund, and contribute savings. Once the large balance of savings is made, then members can begin to borrow small loans (usually at 2% per month) to meet their various needs. Usually, members take the loans for medical emergency, to meet education expenditure needs, to make small improvements to their houses, to bulk purchase food, etc. All loans have to be returned before the end of the CBSG year (financial closing). If some capital amount is not loaned out by CBSG, then it is deposited in the groups' bank account to earn some interest.

- **Who is doing the audit of SUDVOs accounts?**

A. The three-member audit committee is responsible to conduct the audit of SUDVOs accounts.

## **KEY LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE SHARING VISIT TO TAJIKISTAN AND RELEVANCE TO SINDH:**

### **A: Women's empowerment:**

The empowerment of women showed equal participation of them in all sectors such as education, health and employment. Their responsibilities seemed to be equally distributed in all spheres of life. The women were not only performing their duties at homes but also in their society. Many of the local shops were owned and managed by women in the local markets.

### **B: Income generating activities:**

It was found out that women were actively taking part in all the income generating activities. AKF/MSDSP have provided the support to women members of different community institutions who are now engaged in preparing of jams from the processed fruits and vegetables to sell them in the markets to get financial benefits. Therefore, due to these institutions, women members have become economically vibrant and have set up their micro enterprises. It is quite interesting to note that some of these women entrepreneurs have grown their enterprises to provide employment opportunities to other women as well.

### **C: Social sectors (health and education):**

It was observed that the community and government are in close coordination to work jointly for planning and implementation in all social sectors like education, health and community physical infrastructure. It was also learnt that VOs have developed here the health emergency fund to help the sick and needy community members and education emergency funds to utilise it for the renovation of the elementary schools on the priority basis.



**D: Collaboration with local government/authorities:**

Community Institutions (CIs) have increased collaboration with local authority by registering with it and undertook multiple events such as various vaccination campaigns, national, cultural and sports events. The heads of VOs are now members of Jamoat council and work closely with the head of Jamoat. Therefore, communities and Jamoat prepare plans together to improve the socio-economic conditions of the area. Through Jamoat, CIs have access to the district authorities. Jamoat Head visits villages and attends the VO meetings. This provides them an opportunity to directly communicate with community members in an organised and transparent manner.

**E: Sustainability of Community Institutions:**

The Community Institutions (CIs) like SUDVOs and VOs have sustained due to the activity of

saving of members of group and undertaking of various other projects which gave huge benefit to the people. In addition to this, the prolonged support of AKF/MSDSP played its role for the sustainability of these institutions. The trust level of people increased due to the registration of their institutions with the government that also played its due part in the sustainability of these organisations.

Another factor of sustainability of these institutions is the realisation of people about the importance of the existence of the institutes because people know that if they do not work in the VO then it will be excluded from the government planning. Thus, the people show interest to work as an active member of the VO to solve some of their pressing problems on their own. It was also learnt that Community Institutions have become self-reliant and independent which indicates the main reason behind their sustainability.

# **COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK BY TEAM MEMBERS**



*Mr. Mohammad Kashif  
Khoso,*

Planning Officer, Planning and  
Development, Government of Sindh

“I feel honoured to be part of this European Union funded experience sharing visit under its SUCCESS programme. I am also grateful to worthy chairman of P&D Government of Sindh who nominated me for this visit. This visit strengthened my belief that in the absence of social, political and administrative pillars, the government cannot ameliorate the socio-economic condition of the people. Further, I came to know that this three-tiered social mobilisation concept cannot eradicate poverty overnight it requires some time. Lastly, it is my firm belief that government funded UCBPRP and EU funded SUCCESS programmes will prove to be a huge success soon and will become models for other governments and the development partners.”





SUCCESS



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION

*Mr. Koshif*

Civil Society Officer, Agha Khan  
Foundation (AKF) Tajikistan

“It is always an interesting experience to welcome the participants from Pakistan. All the participants took great interest and discussed common areas of their interest in the meetings. As there were participants from the Government of Sindh as well as from different RSPs, the meetings with the government officials, VOs and SUDVOs proved to be effective. Moreover, the participants not only appreciated the positive points but also identified the challenges and gave their recommendations. AKF/MSDSP looks forward to receiving more participants from Pakistan to share their experiences of social mobilisation.”





*Mr. Nadeem Roshan  
Shah,*

Taluka Coordinator, Thardeep Rural  
Development Program (TRDP)

“I observed that there is more women participation as compared to men in all activities in Tajikistan. The work which is being done by my organisation for last many years is related to this work. Government cooperation with community institutions is admirable because it has provided one room to the head of SUDVO in government building to have a direct contact and involvement in planning.”





SUCCESS



*Mr. Jaleelulah Khokhar,*

District Programme Officer, National  
Rural Support Programme (NRSP)

“I am so impressed from the coordination between government and community institutions, so this is a good message for all of us. We should also work on the joint coordination between government and community institution in Sindh through SUCCESS programme. Government of Tajikistan is aware from the issues being faced by the community and it also takes steps to resolve the problems and issues on Jamoat/UC level. The community and government are jointly working in planning and implementation in all sectors like education, health and community physical infrastructure which has inspired me a lot. This is what I have learnt and will apply this in my area of work.”





**NRSP**

SUCCESS

*Ms. Fozia Khaskheli,*

District Programme Officer, National  
Rural Support Programme (NRSP)

“I am glad to see the work of Village Organisations (VOs) which have been working here for last 20 years with the ownership of government. The VOs are included in the planning of government. If people do not work in the VO, it will be excluded from the government planning which indicates the sustainability of community institutions. The policies of government regarding early marriages, literacy and immunization in Tajikistan are worth appreciable, and they are being implemented with full community support.”

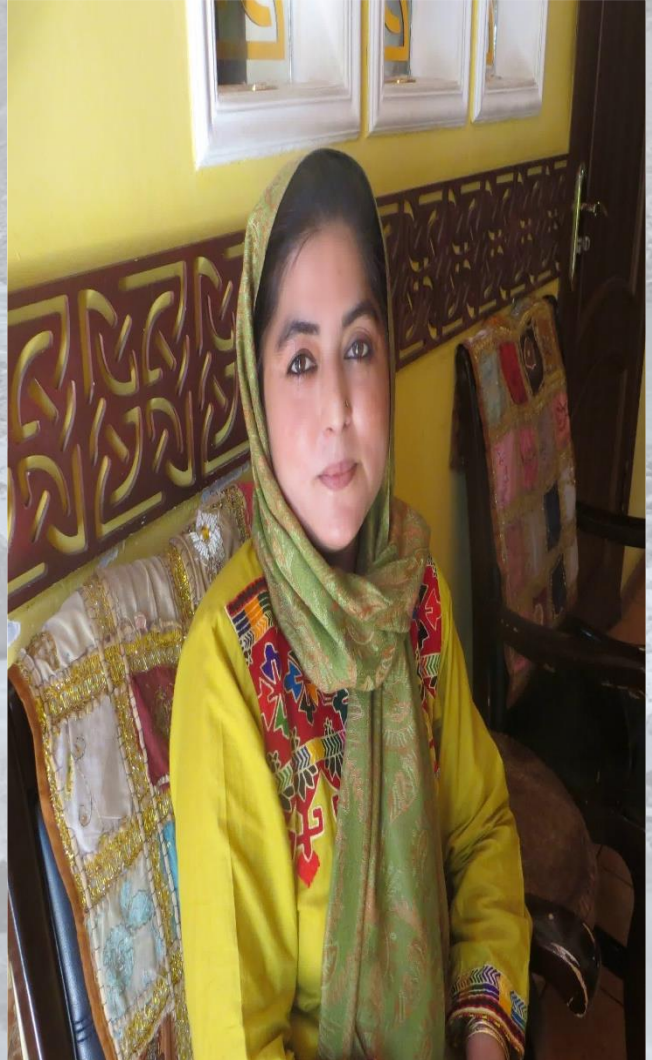




*Ms. Samina Barkat Ali,*

Training Coordinator, Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO)

“It was nice that people were using the skills learnt in the training provided by AKF/MSDSP as we visited fruit processing units in different VOs who were preparing and selling the products in the markets on reasonable price. But, I see there is less utilisation of skills learnt in the vocational trainings in Sindh because they do not have access to market which shows the missing of linkages with the markets on which work must be done. VOs, SUDVOs and government departments were aware of each other’s activities so there was no gap of communication. Community institutions are facilitating women to become more economically active by setting up micro enterprises. Some of these women entrepreneurs have grown their enterprises and now provide employment opportunities to other women. This growth factor is important learning for me. The equal participation of women in education and employment showed women empowerment to the great extent. There were no barriers for women in Tajikistan to work anywhere else and their responsibilities were also equally distributed. I observed that it was not male dominated society as compared to Sindh.”







*Mr. Pervez Ahmed Chandio,*

Director UCBPRP, Planning and  
Development, Government of Sindh

"I have observed that the AKF/MSDSP supported community institutions are vibrant and play a pro-active role at the local level. They also maintain excellent relationships with local authorities such that the latter are fully aware of all their activities, and the major reason for this is that the community institutions and local authorities undertake joint planning. A region that faced famine in early 1990s is now developing rapidly. The community driven development adopted from AKRSP Pakistan has played a key role in this transformation. Similar CDD approach is now being rolled out all across Sindh and I am confident that this too will bring about a revolution with the support of Government of Sindh."





*Mr. Aftab Hussain Baloach,*

Coordinator CIF, Thardeep Rural  
Development Programme (TRDP)

“The concept of cross border trade is interesting for me that AKDN has constructed five cross border bridges which enhanced connectivity between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in terms of cross border markets for economic activity towards livelihood improvements. But, I think that it is not only economic activity, but these bridges are most powerful and important symbols in human society as it shows the symbol of humanity, connection, cooperation and harmony between two countries. In addition, I would say that the work of AKF/MSDSP is based on integrated development programme which is a good example for me. Community based saving groups also promote local entrepreneurship.”





*Ms. Sultana Ali Kori*

Field Researcher, Rural Support Programmes  
Network (RSPN)

“I am very pleased to see that the community-based saving groups were utilising the savings in better way and the ownership of saving box was provided to three members while in the SUCCESS programme in Sindh, only CO Manager looks after the saving activities due to which saving is not properly utilised. Therefore, I believe that it should be replicated in COs in the SUCCESS programme for the proper utilisation of savings to give more benefits to the community members. In addition, the community organisations were building their own village development funds for social protection without relying on government and other organisations which was also worth appreciable.”





*Mr. Mohammad Dittal*  
*Kalhora*

Chief Executive Officer, Sindh Rural  
Support Organisation (SRSO)

“I learnt and observed a lot but most important is community saving groups (Sub-groups of VOs) are really doing wonders.”



*Mr. Nadir Ali Shah*

Field Researcher, Rural Support  
Programmes Network (RSPN)

“AKF/MSDSP have played a catalytic role in fostering community institutions and strengthening them. In the longer term, as the Tajikistan Government finds more fiscal space, community institutions will be well placed to access support.”





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