



SUCCESS

SINDH UNION COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING SUPPORT PROGRAMME

FEATURE STORY

ONCE A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, TODAY FIRDOUS EVEN HAS THE MEN IN THE COMMUNITY LISTENING TO HER

Since 2015, EU-funded SUCCESS has managed to reach out to, identify and prepare a cohort of nearly 3000 courageous and dynamic 'Community Resource Persons (CRPs)'. These women have developed leadership skills and are now driving social change in their communities. During sessions on education, health, family planning, sanitation, environment, civics and women's rights, CRPs help women to access public services and enjoy better living standards. This is happening in poverty-stricken villages that had been a challenge for decades.

AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSON, FIRDOUS' SERVICES ARE IN DEMAND.

Many have a strong work ethic honed through their own personal challenges. One such woman is Firdous, a CRP from Kambar Shahdaskot. She travels from one village to another in Union Council (UC) Junani to enroll girls in schools, take expectant mothers to hospital during labour, and help immunisation teams establish contact with families in remote locations.

This is on top of her own struggles to educate her children after her husband accused her of infidelity and subjected her to physical abuse early in their marriage.

FIRDOUS HAD NO CONFIDENCE WHEN HER NEIGHBOURS NOMINATED HER TO LEAD.

In 2016, Sindh Rural Support

Organisation (SRSO) began forming women community organisations in her village under the EU-funded SUCCESS programme. Back then, Firdous, like so many women around her, did not believe in her own abilities to make a difference at the time. Nonetheless, fellow village women encouraged her to lead and mobilise them.

She helped the SRSO team form the Saba Gul community organisation and was selected as its President. Soon after, she was nominated to the village organisation and then to LSO Chandroki, one of the largest in the SUCCESS programme, where she currently serves as treasurer. This is despite continuing to work as CRP providing guidance to a large network of rural women across the entire union council.

To dispel the myths surrounding the work women were doing during programme activities, Firdous even took her husband to some meetings where he could see for himself that she was positively utilising her time outside the home.

EDUCATION IS A PRIORITY FOR FIRDOUS.

As she explains "I do not want women to go through what I went through and I understand that today girls need to be educated more than ever so they can fight through the system."

She started by going door-to-door in her village to ask parents to send their children to school. As a result of Firdous' consistent efforts, more



Community Resource Person Firdous during a Community Awareness Toolkit session with beneficiaries

than 80 children from her village are now studying in BRAC-funded primary schools. However, at the union council level, the problem is magnified. There are scores of villages without enough schools beyond primary level for girls to continue their education. For security reasons, parents do not send them outside the village, resulting in massive drop-outs. Then there are villages which do not even have a government primary school,

such as Village Murad Bhatti in the same UC where over 100 girls have been demanding a school.

Over the course of three years, Firdous feels there has been a monumental shift in the behavior of both men and women in her village towards the role of women in society. They also recognise the importance of working together in teams to drive change. The response is, however, more pronounced in men.



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(SUCCESS is funded by the European Union)

Implementing Partners



Technical Assistance Partner



SUCCESS is supported by the Government of Sindh

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

TODAY, EVEN THE MEN COME TO HEAR WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY.

Men now encourage women to attend Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) sessions given by her regularly. Some days they even join the women to hear what 'Baji' – as she is often called by everyone – has to say. She helps get women to hospital for medical treatments and deliveries regardless of what time of the day it is, and despite not having any transport of her own. As a result of the CAT sessions, women now increasingly prefer visiting government hospitals over home remedies as they receive professional guidance and free medicines. They have also begun practicing birth spacing, and are mindful to keep their medicines and routine tests in check.

Most recently, Firdous had to convince a large number of parents who refused to get their children vaccinated against polio. This was after a news reached their village about an incident in Peshawar where hundreds of children apparently fell sick after receiving

polio drops. She went back and forth several times between the polio teams and households till everyone was on board. Indeed, some of the parents had not even heard about the vaccine and why it is needed. As Firdous explains, large distances and poor infrastructure in the district prevent people from visiting hospitals or sending their children to school. Much in the same way, government functionaries or other development organisations fail to reach them as well.

As for development goals for her UC, she is working with her teams at Joint Development Committee meetings with district authorities to advocate and demand the installation of tested water pumps in majority of the villages so that they can drink safe water. A second priority is the construction of schools in villages so girls can obtain a basic education.

"I'm excited to work and do things for my community. I'm hopeful that more changes will be seen in coming months."

POLICY

EXPANSION OF POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMME TO ALL DISTRICTS OF SINDH

With the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) approved in October 2018 by the Government of Sindh (GoS), the SUCCESS' Technical Assistance team is closely following the roadmap for the implementation of the strategy's five pillars. The PC-1 approved this year called for the expansion of the People's Poverty Reduction Programme to all districts of Sindh. Sukkur and Ghotki will be implemented along traditional social mobilisation lines by SRSO while other districts will take a different approach. The GoS had already decided to include three districts of Karachi in the expansion programme, and these districts together with Hyderabad, Naushero Firoze and Shaheed Benazirabad will place an emphasis on employment opportunities, enterprise development and urban economic clusters. Thus, the second main element of the PRS

(Addressing Urban Poverty) are being incorporated into the PPRP expansion.

Implementation of the third element of the PRS (Rural Growth Centres - RGCs) is also underway, with an initial allocation of PKR 2 billion in the 2019/20 Annual Development Plan to start the pilot RGC programme. The Chief Minister Sindh, Mr. Murad Ali Shah, along with the Cabinet had already approved four districts: Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta and Sujawal as potential RGC pilots and in July 2019, Larkana was added. The RGC will serve a hub or focal point to provide goods and improved services to a surrounding cluster of villages. This approach tends to lead to a consolidation of services, lower unit costs and increased opportunities for economic growth.

ADVOCACY

BILAWAL BHUTTO ZARDARI MEETS COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN SUKKUR



On April 1st, Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari spoke at a dialogue arranged by SRSO, where he met leaders of 200 community organisations from Kambar Shahdadkot and Larkana, and listened to their stories of hope and courage. He also distributed 20 sub-grants to women community leaders to start income-generating activities that reduce household-level poverty. At the dialogue, he encouraged women to participate in local body elections and monitor activities of their elected local representatives in development.

COMMUNITY

PLANTING TREES FOR A GREENER SINDH

Environmental sustainability and preservation is imperative to protect poor households that are dependent on the climate for their livelihood and survival. To raise awareness on how to mitigate risks, NRSP conducted a workshop on 'Environment Protection and Tree Plantation' in UC Jarwar Negan, Tando Allahyar with District Forest Department, and planted 650 trees at a selected site. LSOs in Dadu and Jamshoro also organised tree plantation activities with schoolchildren and communities throughout summer. A total of 14, 385 trees were planted in the two districts this summer.

ADVOCACY

MEDIA SESSION WITH JOURNALISTS IN HYDERABAD

SUCCESS held a media advocacy session with journalists from Hyderabad and Tando Allahyar Press Clubs in September to enable better outreach of the programme and to develop a cadre of journalists capable of, and interested in, reporting development issues with nuance and data. The session was followed by a field visit to Village Goth Muhammad Ibraheem Mir Jutt where journalists from DAWN, Sindh Express, and KTN to name a few, attended a meeting of LSO Dasori and interacted with women beneficiaries of CPI, MHI, TVST and CIF interventions to hear about their challenges and the solutions they are now implementing to improve their social and economic well-being through SUCCESS.

ADVOCACY SUCCESS AND RSPN HOLD 11TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF LSOs IN ISLAMABAD



To celebrate the central role LSOs play in social mobilisation, the EU-funded SUCCESS and RSPN held 11th Annual Convention of LSOs on June 29th. This year's convention focused upon two prime achievements of the LSOs: their role in graduating people out of chronic poverty, and in improving access to public sector services by establishing synergies and accountability mechanisms with local governments. Both of these are central to RSPN's strategy to reduce poverty. The convention brought LSO representatives from all provinces to profile community-driven development strategies that are being implemented with provincial governments in rural areas. The aim of these is to give women and families a fighting chance at economic success through education, health, and infrastructure.

One of the case studies presented was of a UCBPRP's beneficiary, Ms. Shahjahan from Shikarpur. She set up a fish farming business that drastically improved her income and brought her poverty score from 10 to 32 with an initial grant of PKR 5,000. CRP Allahdini from Tando Muhammad Khan showcased the impact on household savings by carrying out water testing in her UC. This has lowered incidences of water-borne diseases and helped families save on health-related expenses. Former Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Sartaj Aziz advised LSOs to incorporate tech-based solutions in their work to benefit from the IT movement in Pakistan, while Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan H.E. Jean-François Cautain urged government officials to institutionalise inclusion of local communities and women (50% of Pakistan's population) to reduce poverty in rural areas. Speakers agreed that several challenges persist with regards to sustainability in local governance mechanisms that affect Pakistan's progress on Global Goals. However, success stories emerging from the ground-up is a call for all governments to make even greater efforts to sustain the progress made so far.

ADVOCACY SUCCESS' POLICY AND ADVOCACY DIALOGUE IN KARACHI



SUCCESS hosted a Policy and Advocacy Dialogue on Health, Women Empowerment and Local Governance on August 7th to disseminate results of its research studies on all three themes. The dialogue aimed at identifying recent gains, revisiting challenges from previous years and highlighting the emerging opportunities in rural development for women created by SUCCESS, in an attempt to foster a competitive public-sector delivery mechanism for the poorest of the poor.

Experts and policymakers including Syeda Shehla Raza (Sindh Minister for Women Development), Dr. Sonia Riaz (Deputy Director, Sehat Sahulat Programme), Dr. Shereen Mustafa Narejo (Secretary, Planning and Development Department, Sindh), Dr. Shehla Zaidi (Director, Health Policy and Management, Aga Khan University), Saima Zafar (Jubilee General Insurance), Nuzhat Shirin (Chairperson, Sindh

Commission on the Status of Women), Dr Asma Hyder (Associate Professor, IBA), Mr. Arshad Rashid (Development Advisor) and Dr. Abid Mehmood (Research Fellow, Cardiff University) championed policy recommendations from the studies and shared further insights. Recommendations included:

- integrating health insurance coverage in all on-going poverty reduction programmes in Sindh;
- urging the Government of Sindh to closely monitor the inputs, outputs and outcomes;
- identify ways to sustain SUCCESS activities post-2021;
- providing safe spaces and public transport to increase the mobility of rural women;
- deliberating on amendments to the Rules of Business and the public development process at district level to incorporate needs identified by community institutions

COMMUNITY HIV/AIDS AWARENESS SESSIONS IN SINDH

Following the recent epidemic of HIV/AIDS in Sindh, RSPs have been organising frequent awareness sessions, powered by Community Resource Persons. In September, both TRDP and NRSP held sessions in the villages of Jamshoro and Tando Allahyar respectively, to help rural communities in

adopting prevention methods, and understanding symptoms and treatments. Mr. Rafique Ahmed Memon, Focal Person for AIDS Control Programme in Sindh, also participated in the NRSP session to address concerns of the community members.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

as of September 2019



849,812

HOUSEHOLDS COVERED BY POVERTY SCORECARD SURVEY



575,926

ORGANISED HOUSEHOLDS



29,321

WOMEN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS (COs) FORMED



3,384

WOMEN VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS (VOs) FORMED



312

WOMEN LOCAL SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS (LSOs) FORMED

55,367

WOMEN CO LEADERS WHO RECEIVED COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS TRAINING



7,480

WOMEN VO/LSO LEADERS WHO RECEIVED LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT SKILLS TRAINING



3,453

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS (CRPs) TRAINED



24,601

HOUSEHOLDS BENEFITING FROM INCOME GENERATING GRANTS (IGGs)



365

MILLION (PKR) AMOUNT OF INCOME GENERATING GRANTS (IGGs) GIVEN TO POOR HOUSEHOLDS



68,076

HOUSEHOLDS BENEFITING FROM COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND (CIF)



1,093

MILLION (PKR) AMOUNT OF CIF DISBURSED TO POOR HOUSEHOLDS



16,231

COMMUNITY MEMBERS TRAINED IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

41

JOINT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES FORMED AT TALUKA AND DISTRICT LEVEL



311

NUMBER OF UNION COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (UCDPs) DEVELOPED

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COMMUNITY

AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL VISIT TO LARKANA



In April, the Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, H.E Jean-François Cautain, and Sonia Cautain made their farewell visit to SUCCESS programme areas in District Larkana. The Ambassador met the beneficiaries of IGG, CIF and MHI to learn more about how financial investments and free medical treatments have helped them financially and improved the health of their families.

The Ambassador also participated in a community conference in village Pyaro Magsi, and listened to achievements made and initiatives taken by LSO leaders. The visit culminated in a meeting with Deputy Commissioner Larkana and representatives

from all government line departments to discuss EU-Pakistan cooperation in areas of education, nutrition, poverty reduction and TVET and coordination mechanisms for these at the grassroots level.

The Ambassador emphasised that Pakistan could not progress without gender equality and equity not being ensured at all levels as 50% of Pakistan's population consists of women. He also reiterated the significance of education and the need for political will to ensure that the programme's objectives and deliverables remain sustainable for years to come.

SUCCESS VISITS GILGIT-BALTISTAN FOR CROSS-LEARNING IN COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

For cross-learning and exposure to successful CDD interventions, representatives from RSPN, RSPs and the Government of Sindh from Sujawal, Kambar-Shahdadkot and Dadu visited AKRSP project sites in Skardu and Gilgit in April. There they visited market centres such as Hawa Market and Kehkashan Market established by local rural women. They also saw the Sawera Training Centre that is providing employment to village women as well as LSOs that have consistently helped community members raise household incomes through CDD programmes since

1982. Meetings were held with local start-ups including the Farmers' Cooperative Society and other farming businesses specialising in the sale of organic fruit and vegetables in international markets. A visit to observe irrigation systems in Skardu to provide irrigation channels to rural agricultural land was arranged for participants. The work put in by AKRSP in creating and managing women-led community organisations to collectively build their communities has significantly contributed to a rise in tourism and sustainable peace in the area.



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