



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

National Convention of LSOs

December 13, 2022



www.rspn.org www.success.org.pk

www.facebook.com/successprogramme

Lead Authors

Zubaida Yasub, Knowledge Management Officer, SUCCESS, RSPN

All pictures used in this publication are the property of SUCCESS and its partners.

© 2023 Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN). All rights reserved.



EUROPEAN UNION

“This Publication has been produced by Rural Support Programme (RSPN) with assistance of the European Union. The content of this publication are the sole responsibility of RSPN and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.”

More information about European Union is available on:

Web: <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/pakistan/>

Twitter: @EUPakistan

Facebook: European-Union-in-Pakistan/269745043207452

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Proceedings of the Event	4
Session I: The Role of LSOs in Poverty Graduation of Households and Addressing Sustainable Development Goals	4
Rural Support Programmes' Approach and Experience of Implementing Poverty Graduation Programmes in Pakistan and South Asia.....	5
Poverty Graduation and Addressing SDGs at the Local Level - The Experience of LSOs	6
Planning Commission's Plan for Poverty Reduction in Pakistan	11
History and the Role of Rural Support Programmes in Pakistan	12
Key Lessons Learnt from the EU-funded SUCCESS & BRACE Programmes	13
Session II: Local Communities and Climate Change	13
Impact of 2022 Floods in Pakistan and their Response: A Reflection by LSOs	14
Local Communities and Climate Change	15
Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks – Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan	19
Appendix: Convention Agenda	20

Introduction

The Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) organised the annual National Convention of the Local Support Organisations (LSOs) on 13th December 2022. The convention is a platform to interact with LSOs (Community based institutions at the Union Council Level), donor agencies, development partners and other stakeholders to share local knowledge and learn from their experiences of implementing community driven development approach in Pakistan's rural communities.

The LSO Convention 2022 focused on local communities' efforts to address sustainable development goals (SDGs), poverty graduation of households and climate change. Representatives of the LSOs from all four provinces, AJK, and Gilgit Baltistan presented their work on implementing the community driven development approach, inclusion of vulnerable members of the community and efforts to graduate households out of poverty. The CEO RSPN, Ms Shandana Khan gave opening remarks and acknowledged the role of RSPs and community members especially women on their presence at the event to celebrate yet another year of successful efforts to reduce poverty at the household level and empower the local communities.

The convention comprised of two panel speaker sessions. The first session highlighted the role of LSOs in poverty graduation of households and addressing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The second session discussed the impact of climate change on rural communities in Pakistan and the role of community institutions in responding to the issue. The RSPN staff, government officials, and international donors appreciated the commitment and passion displayed by the LSOs in their work.

Proceedings of the Event

Session I: The Role of LSOs in Poverty Graduation of Households and Addressing Sustainable Development Goals

The objective of the session was to understand the need for and importance of social mobilisation and present achievements of Community Institutions on poverty graduation of households and addressing the SDGs.

The sessions commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran, by Ms Samina Ashraf, M&E Officer RSPN. Mr Omer Farooq Ramey, Communications Officer, BRACE, RSPN welcomed the participants by giving a brief historical background of the Rural Support Programmes Network and introducing Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan, the Chairman of RSPN. Representatives from the local communities were also invited to the stage to represent their work and celebrate their achievements with the event participants.

Rural Support Programmes' Approach and Experience of Implementing Poverty Graduation Programmes in Pakistan and South Asia

Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman RSPN and the founder of the social mobilisation movement in Pakistan, shared his journey of how he created this organisation to help the poor people to improve their lives and empower the communities. He said that almost 60 years ago, he attended the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development in East Pakistan Bangladesh as a civil servant where he met a visionary, Mr Akhtar Hameed Khan as the Director of the academy. What he learnt from him was how the poor can be helped. He said,



“I always mention that you cannot help the poor individually; in fact, the poor have to do something, because they all have the potential to improve their livelihood”.

It is only a question of how they identify what potential they have, and what obstacles are preventing them from rising above subsistence. So, the lesson he gained from Mr. Akhtar Hameed Khan was that the poor must do something first and then one can do anything for them. The first thing was that they needed to be organised. Unless they were organised, the potential that they had, could not be materialised. Once organised, they required capital as without capital, they could not do anything. That is what the Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) have been doing for the past 40 years. He said that he was amazed by the response he got from the people of Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral when he was asked by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Geneva to implement those principles, which he learnt from Mr Akhtar Hameed Khan. It was the first time Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan got the opportunity for the long-term process to implement these principles. He delightedly expressed,

“I found their response amazing from the beginning. They not only fulfilled all their obligations but also went much beyond it”.

Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan stressed that in the development partnership both sides, the poor people and the support organisations, the RSPs or government, have to fulfil their obligations.

After 10 years of implementing the approach in AKRSP Gilgit Baltistan and Chitral; in 1994, the United Nations (UN) approached him to take these lessons of AKRSP to South Asia. A person named Raju from India was assigned to work with him and he was completely overwhelmed with what he saw in the Northern areas of Pakistan. He said,

“The problem is that we the government don't believe that people have the potential, we think that we have to do everything for them”.

Therefore, that was the opportunity for him to go to India and implement these principles and when these principles were presented there, Mr Khan was working with a million people there in no time.

“Thanks to the people who worked with me Raju and others, they took it to a 45 million and that way the advocacy of this program was established. This is what I learnt from my teacher that the principles are as precise as the law of gravity. If you deviate from these simple principles, you have to believe that people have the potential of something and people agree to be organised If these two things do not happen then they will never rise above subsistence. All that you hear

about what I have done, but the basic thing is that it is not me, it is the people, who accepted it and obviously, I was very fortunate in getting my colleagues who worked with me who believed in it and did it”, Shoab Sultan Khan articulated.

Poverty Graduation and Addressing SDGs at the Local Level - The Experience of LSOs

1. Marya Partab, General Secretary, LSO Bhae Dino Sathio (NRSP)

Ms Marya Partab, thanked Mr Shoab Sultan Khan, EU and NRSP for providing her with an opportunity to represent the LSO Bhae Din Sathio. She said that until the Community Institutions were not formed, the women did not have knowledge and access to their rights; they were restricted to their homes and were not allowed to get education. She further expressed,

"A mother who raises her daughter did not previously have a say in making decisions about her daughter's marriage. She did not have any role in deciding for the child whom she gave birth. The women were unable to take decisions in their households. When the SUCCESS programme organised the women and formed Women Organisations, it brought change. The women who once were not allowed to step out of their homes are now standing in front of you, today. Thank You, SUCCESS Programme”.



She highlighted with excitement,

“Our LSO was formed on 31st October 2016. We celebrate 31st October the same way as we celebrate the Independence Day of Pakistan because on this day, we, the rural women, also got some freedom to take decisions and think for ourselves”.

Marya thanked the SUCCESS program for forming women organisations and giving them the opportunity to come forward.

“I thank the SUCCESS Programme for spreading awareness and organising rural women. Through the community awareness sessions, we have learnt the importance of education. Education is important which is why you all are here and I am also here today representing Sindh. I used to tell my people to provide education to their daughters along with the skills and now they are doing it,” Marya Partab expressed.

2. Saeeda, Chairperson, LSO Kiran Falah Women Welfare (SRSP)

Ms Saeeda represented the LSO Kiran Falah Women Welfare at the National Convention of LSOs 2023.

“This is the first time in a community convention that we have a member from the NMD Orakazi district, which is a huge step for the women of the tribal areas to come here not only for herself but also for the community. I want to congratulate SRSP and the community Saeeda is from,” said Ms Shandana Humayun Khan, CEO of RSPN.

Ms. Saeeda expressed that FATA has its own culture and traditions, and the people are bound to follow the norms. Though its name has changed, the Jirga system still prevails. She said,

“In our area, for a woman to step out of the home and form an organisation was almost impossible. The women were not allowed to go to a doctor even during the pregnancy, due to which either the child would lose their lives. Similarly, the women were considered solely responsible for giving birth to a girl. Though schools were present, and teachers were there, but the girls were not allowed to go to school. Barely, if some of them get permission to get an education, it was because the school was either nearby or within the community. They were not allowed to go to other areas. Today, it is a moment of pride for me that despite being from such an area, my community has come so far, and I am here standing and speaking in front of all of you, for that I am thankful to SRSP’.

She shared that before 2018, and the arrival of SRSP to their area, there was no concept of organisations. The community men had announced that they would not let any NGO enter the area and work there because they were of the view that these development organisations will promote immodesty and make the people unemployed by providing free stuff to them. When a female representative from SRSP came to the area, the women were neither allowed to see even another woman nor were they able to talk to her. However, she met Saeeda's husband and convinced him to let Saeeda join the program.

Ms Saeeda further shared that in those times the word organisation was prohibited to use since it was the time of the Taliban and operation was going on in the area, so they found the solution to the problem



and instead of using the word organisation, they used the word Committee. This way the first organisation was formed.

“We named the organisation according to the area; we couldn't give it a female name, since it was not approved in our culture to call a woman's name publicly. It was considered against their honour. Therefore, we named the WCO ‘Aman Committee’ so that if the community men came to know about it, they would not object to it. Similarly, we named the other committees formed the ‘Itefaq Committee’ and ‘Itehaad Committee’. We have formed 13 committees (Organisations) in our area,” Saeeda stated.

When the SRSP told us about the savings, the community thought that SRSP would take all this saved money from the people. However, when they assured proper card keeping and told them that they will have their accounts in their names, and then the women got the trust and started saving money. Even now, the project has concluded but we still hold meetings on the fifth of every month and do proper entries on the saving cards. Now men in the community are also saving money. We have saved almost six lacs in our organisations. Women have earned the respect in the community because they have their own savings and they can use them. The journey from the very first committee to the network was not easy, we are thankful to the SRSP who encouraged us, mobilised our men and helped us to reach this stage.

In the context of FATA, it happened the very first time that LSO started giving loans to the community by going door to door from the savings of the committees. The woman from our CO who benefited from the loan we first time provided is differently abled; she will share her journey herself.

3. Bastaj, CIF beneficiary, LSO Kiran Falah Women Welfare (SRSP)

Ms. Bastaj a differently abled woman belongs to a poor household in Mach district Orakzai. She said,

“As you all were told that in our area a normal woman was considered nothing, whereas I was differently abled. You can imagine what could have been my importance in my area. However, when the committees were formed, I was encouraged by the women that I am equally a human being. I received a loan worth 20k and I started a small business by opening a shop in a cupboard in my home. Along with the shop I also got training in Crochet work, when I do not get customers, I use to make the products and sell them in my shop. The shop, which I started with a cupboard having a stock of 20 thousand, has now improved into a general store having the stuff of 150-200k. I used to save 5k initially, but now I earn 20-25k and support my widow mother. The area where my existence was not accepted and approved, in that area I people have given my shop a name “Baji General Store” where not only women but men also do groceries. My general store is the first female general store in the area”



4. Noreen, Executive Body Member, LSO Tootak (BRSP)
M Tariq Baloch, President, LSO Tootak (BRSP)

Ms Noreen, the president of the bright women network and Mr M. Tariq Baloch- the president of LSO Tootak thanked the BRACE Programme for inviting them to the national convention of the LSOs to present their struggles and experiences of their LSO with the audience.



Ms Noreen talked about the interventions and initiatives undertaken by her LSO Tootak to improve the livelihood of women enabling them to start small businesses. She said that the women of her community had skills but they were unable to set up a small business as they were lacking the required resources. Once they were given the CIFs, they started earning. Those who wanted their children to get an education have now enrolled their children in schools.

She said that the IGG, was given to 64 Women who were the poorest, and it helped in improving their lives to some extent. ***“We cannot alleviate poverty, but we can provide them sources to minimise poverty,”*** Ms Noreen stated.

She mentioned that some of them have opened shops; some have bought sewing machines and started tailoring work.

“For women to come forward in the context of tribble areas was something a great challenge. I am standing here representing their voices. I am telling you all that I have witnessed this. Those women who once had no role in the decision-making within their home, they now have started their businesses” Ms Noreen articulated.

She further added that the women after having the adults’ literacy courses are now able to write their names and help their children with their daily homework; this is a life-changing step for any rural woman. Similarly, TVET has also helped women in earning and saving money. COs and CIs have a tremendous role in mobilising the communities through campaigns on the enrolment of children in schools, civil registration, COVID and Immunisation vaccinations.

“When our COs and VOs formed, we women thought to have our own network, since the LSO is men’s LSO and though we are the members of the LSO we wanted to have our separate identity. Then we decided and formed a network named “Bright Women Network”. Thank you for giving

us this platform and making us able to come and stand over here to represent our UC, and represent those women who could not come this far. This is a proud moment for me to represent my community today", Ms Noreen enunciated.

Mr Tariq shared that their LSO is operating like a mini-bank and the CIF loans provided to the beneficiaries have contributed to the significant change in their lives. On average, the CIF beneficiaries earn 12-15k monthly. Their LSO also works towards the inclusion of persons with special needs through collaboration with the Social Welfare Department. The LSO's plan is to implement the development needs identified in the UCDP and empower women to participate with them in taking decisions for local development initiatives.

5. *Zareena, President, LSO Sheikh Geo (TRDP)*



Ms Zareena Said that before these organisations formed, women were unaware of their potential, and they did not know that like men they could start a small-scale business and earn money. When they were given the CIF and IGG, they started earning by opening shops at home, stitching clothes and by keeping the livestock. Boys in our UC were given training on bike repairing and tailoring; now they are running small businesses.

She mentioned that the villages in her UC and the nearby villages lacked safe and clean drinking water; her LSO approached the District Commissioner and appealed for the provision of drinkable water. Due to the efforts of her LSO members, the DC provided two water plants to the villages in her UC and the nearby villages.

"I stumbled upon the news about a fire in a nearby village Faiz Muhammad Chandio in Taluka KN Shah - more than 100 houses were affected that including widows and children. Our LSO along with the community through the self-help initiative collected donations and we went to help our neighbour village. We were

able to deliver aid in time because we were organised and the community trusted us with their donations", MS Zareena expressed.

She further added, *"The recent floods- badly affected our UC; almost 70% of the households were affected. We updated this on the Facebook page of our LSO and requested that other organisations help this community. This way we have received donations, ration bags, clothes and toys and distributed them among the people in our UC. The women in our community have immense potential but are unable to generate income due to limited resources, through providing loans to these women; we want to unleash their potential so they can improve their lives".*

6. *Zobra, LSO Muskan (TRDP)*

Ms Zohra from LSO Muskan stated, ***“When we initially formed a CO, people objected and started saying that there is no need to form women's organisations since women are incapable of doing anything as men can do. Women should stay home and it is only their responsibility. However, the women collectively decided to form an organisation, and we approached SRSO and showed our willingness to be united to have our own identities. This way we formed the COs, then VO and then LSOs”.***



She confidently mentioned that her poverty score was 8 and she was eligible for the IGG and a house, when she was asked for receiving the IGG and for building a house, she refused to take it. ***“I said though I have a small house, at least I have it, it should be given to that poor woman who doesn't have a shelter. I refused to get the IGG also, I said my husband earns 300-400 a day, which is enough for us, so I asked them to give it to a woman who is deserving. So the IGG was given to a woman in my village, she bought***

a goat with the money and I have her prayers now”.

7. *Sher Afzal Khan, Manager, LSO Bijar (AKRSP)*



Mr Sher Afzal Khan started his presentation with these lines, ***“You have already seen Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan, and I will only say one thing, believe me, today the birds and beasts of our area are praying for him. The situation in Chitral was not as it is today. When Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan and his team came to Chitral with the motto 'Tanzeem, Hunar aur Bachat' they totally changed the map of Chitral. They had to walk miles, however, because of their efforts and their struggles, COs VO and LSOs formed and a person like me who had just seen the walls of a college or a university is now able to stand here and speak in front of all of you”.***

Sher Afzal Khan added that his LSO believes that it is of utmost importance for communities to help themselves. The population of Chitral is of 30 million. He mentioned that their communities run village banks at the community level, focusing towards Community Based Savings to enhance further access to finances at the community level.

Planning Commission’s Plan for Poverty Reduction in Pakistan

Mr Dawood Barech, Additional Secretary from Ministry of Planning, Development



and Special Initiatives Government of Pakistan, was delighted to say,

“I am proud to see the courage and confidence of these women and the level of articulation exhibited by them to present their needs. I could see in their eyes, I could listen in their voices that for a vision, for a dream to change their lives, all of them are very much hopeful. I could see and observe the eloquence with which they were able to articulate their genuine needs and most importantly, all of them had the courage and confidence to break out from the traps and the vicious circle of poverty and impoverishment. There could not be a better definition or demonstration of development and change, than which we witnessed this morning”.

Mr Dawood mentioned that the ministry of planning and development they have always acknowledged the reach and the network of RSPN. They have been partners with RSPN in the past and hope to keep this association and built on the strengths mitigating the effects of damages of the floods, and particularly, in collaborating, to have a possible recovery and reconstructive efforts required.

He said, ***“Tootak - it is the epitome of conservative and tribal norms. I am thrilled and honoured (cannot think of a better word ATM) to see a woman from Tootak here. I want to congratulate you for overcoming these battles and fighting poverty and being here today. The way these women showed conviction and courage to articulate their struggles that were amazing. I have not seen any better demonstration of change”.***

History and the Role of Rural Support Programmes in Pakistan



Ms Shandana Humayun Khan, CEO RSPN, welcomed the colleagues and supporters from the EU, Mr Shoab Sultan Khan, and the board of RSPN and said,

“Although in the background all the good work, we have seen has really been a huge effort on the part of the RSPs who work with these communities and support them. I would like everyone to give a hand to the CEOs of the RSPs who are here”.

She stated that the concept of poverty graduation globally started back in 2002 and then it was replicated. However, in Pakistan itself, there have been large programmes whether the EU, World Bank, government and others fund them.

She mentioned that the programs like BRACE, SUCCESS and PEACE, which has ended in KP; really look at not only organising people into institutions but also focusing on strengthening linkages between civil society and the government. The EU programmes implemented by the RSPs have technical assistance from the three provinces. These programmes work closely with the provincial governments to formalise these links. She added,

“We are hoping by the end of BRACE in the other year also, that Baluchistan may be the first province where this is done. We did attempt this under SUCCESS and SUCCESS had very good coordination at the district level, the LSO activists and government departments and the SUCCESS TA support the government in drafting the poverty reduction strategy, however, we could not formalise this link between government departments and the community institutions”.

Ms Shandana Humayun Khan further said that there are components of poverty reduction programmes, which are common, one is the targeted programmes and obviously, RSPN used the PSC to target which

households are the poorest. The other is the aspect of graduation as one of the presenters stated, if one starts with the grant, moves to loan, and moves to business that graduation is something that can be tracked. Skills, infrastructure, savings programme, these all are important things and for sustainability a strong institution of the people and links with the government.

She added, ***“I think you would all agree that having the presence of so many impressive women activists is really something unusual. We have made a conscious effort to invite these path-breaking women to present at this event to honour their bravery and courage. Today is a special day - it is Aga Khans birthday. The seed that he has planted and the hard work of Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan is realising not only in Pakistan, but other regions in South Asia”.***

Key Lessons Learnt from the EU-funded SUCCESS & BRACE Programmes

Mr Bilal Naqeeb shared some key lessons learnt from the SUCCESS and BRACE programme. He highlighted that the total number of households reached out in both programmes is approximately one million. The lessons documented for these programmes are components of social mobilisation, which is a three-tiered approach and a driving force in planning and implementing the whole programme in local communities. The poverty scorecard census is a unique and valuable feature that helped in reaching the desired target groups. The income-generating grants are small support to households, which are struggling with their economic challenges. CIF is an initiative, which was set up at the LSO level, it is a revolving fund providing financial support and services to those who have ideas but they do not have financial resources. The CPIs were largely around drinking water schemes and drainage schemes. Under these projects collaboration with government, and institutions have been done to develop skills so that people have access to employment opportunities. ALNS- the programmes offered to illiterate women basic education and practical literacy so that are more receptive to the knowledge. The other component, which is persons with special needs, is taking care of differently abled persons in the target communities by providing them with assistance and the devices they need.



Under the SUCCESS programme, 24% of CIF and 90% of IGG beneficiaries moved out of PSC 0-23 and under the BRACE programme it is 45%. The purpose of documenting the lessons learnt which are evidence-based from the projects is, it helps to identify and analyse successes and challenges so these successes and challenges help decision makers to refine or replicate or scale up the programme initiatives.

Session II: Local Communities and Climate Change

The objective of this session was to understand the impact of climate change on rural communities in Pakistan and the role of community institutions in responding to the issue

Impact of 2022 Floods in Pakistan and their Response: A Reflection by LSOs

1. Hafiza, Chairperson, LSO Fateh (SRSO)



“I belong to a local village near the Indus River. The journey from my village to here was never easy. However, I was not alone in this journey. Today I am standing here not alone, I have the support and I present the voice of thousands of women from my community. Women in the rural areas of Sindh were considered "Pair ki Jutii" and they have their place near the feet, "unko wahin rehney do, sar pay na charhao" Hafiza said.

She believes that the prime advantage of forming women's organisations is that they became informed about one another. They came to know about one another's challenges and problems. She added that before the formation of these organisations, they were only concerned about their challenges.

Hafiza expressed, *“During the floods, people were starving, they had no place to sit, no food to eat, no electricity, no shelter. We approached the UC chairman and other political leaders and appealed for their help to the people. With the help of these figures and our struggles, we were able to deliver the meal to the people for almost twenty days”.*

She highlighted that initially when they formed these organisations, the UC chairman did not use to hear their demands and appeals. *“Today, I have contact numbers of MNAs and MPAs and I talk to them directly and ask for anything that is needed by people of my Union Council. This only happened because of the JDC platform under the EU-funded SUCCESS Programme,”* she added.

2. Abid Hussain, Finance Secretary, LSO Akbar (BRSP)



Mr Abid from LSO Akbar uttered that when the flood hit the community, it affected 850 households and it washed away around 900 livestock. It completely washed out agriculture, which was the prime source of income for the communities.

He expressed,

“There was no health unit in our UC and we used to go to other UCs for treatment. Now the road, which leads to the other UCs, is

underwater. Our water sources and our schools are still under water. The floods resulted in some casualties and put pregnant women under challenges. We shifted 63 households to safe places and provided a one-time meal for them. Our LSO by self-help distributed clothes to 65 households. The LSO members collected some funds and delivered important medicine to the people. Through NCHD, 50 households were provided with tents”.

3. *Sajida Praveen, Manager, LSO Mutafariq Chauban (NRSP)*



Ms. Sajida Parveen mentioned about the projects implemented by their LSO include social mobilisation, an ongoing project, Livelihood Enhancement Project (LEP) funded by PPAF and Livelihood Enhancement and Enterprise Development (LEED) Project funded by PPAF both are similar in nature. She said that under these projects, some women were given assets and some were given trainings so that they could earn and increase their incomes.

She said that the Alif Ailan Project (education and enrollment project) funded by RSPN helped them to identify the status and quality of education in their LSO, and enrollment ratios in schools. They also came to know about SMC and funds. Under that Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) Project, they were able to open two schools.

Sajida explained that before the formation of LSOs when the UC secretary came to their UC and was asked about the births and deaths of the people, he responded that neither anyone was born nor anyone died since the deaths and births were not being registered. However, after the formation of their LSO, they have registered Computerised National Identity Cards, *Nikkah Namas*, and death certificates. They have also given awareness on inheritance law and rights, about dengue fever, polio and vaccination campaigns. Also made sure the provision of the missing facilities i.e. construction of boundary wall, provision of furniture, drinking water facility, and construction of washrooms in school premises.

During the mass floods of 2022, the members of LSO Mutafariq coordinated with village-level committees, contacted Rescue 1122, the Livestock, and Agriculture department and with community notable at the village and UC levels. Also contacted district-level government /Non-government departments, Health, Food & rehabilitation departments, BISP and NRSP for further support during and after the floods.

The LSO members held coordination meetings with district administration and flood response team for damage assessment, reconstruction of houses and agricultural land, and awareness raising on health, hygiene, education, safe drinking water, sanitation, and gender-based violence in flood-affected areas.

Local Communities and Climate Change

Stephen Berlingutte, Deputy Director, USAID's Office of Climate and Sustainable Growth

“Before I discuss USAID's plans for the coming year and beyond I want to share a special thank you to LSO Fateh, LSO Akbar and LSO Mutfariq Chauhan for the presentations. I really appreciate hearing the stories. In addition to that, I also want to acknowledge the work you do at the LSO level. It is difficult to work, and I know that LSOs have been developing themselves for many years and it has been a long journey for many of you. However, it is very important to work that you are doing and I want to acknowledge that” expressed Mr Stephen Berlingutte.

He said that some of the themes that he heard today resonated with him. He put into words that he saw in the presentations and in the event Hall a great deal of women's leadership and he was so encouraged to see that because in his opinion women are Pakistan's most unutilised resources and to see so many women at this national convention in leadership roles is very encouraging. In addition, in the presentations, he found great demonstrations of community empowerment, organisations, advocacy and mutual support. He believes that this is where development and livelihood improvement will take place through the painstaking work of the community organisations, and he wanted to recognise that.

He shared a couple of points; USAID and US government along with others in the target community have seen Pakistan have a tough year at the household level. They have seen enormous losses in Pakistan above the community, and the household and at the national level; they are doing the best they can to support this country and this country's people. He said,

“The flood took place this summer due to some reasons, these were demonstrations, one day we didn't need these demonstrations because climate change is impacting Pakistan and Pakistan is a vulnerable country to climate change. USAID is developing its five-year strategy where climate change will be our top priority for the coming five years. Therefore, we are now working to help with relief and recovery from the flood. However, one of my messages here today is that as a group that is, Pakistan, the donor community of government, private sector and community organisations, we need to be thinking about how to get ahead of the next flood and for us, that means adaptations and resilience work, also we plan on doing this in the coming five years”.

The final point he made is that USAID recognises the value of community organisations and in particular rural development, the role of community organisations in climate change adaptations. Therefore, they want to collaborate with this network in the coming time when they begin designing the programmes. Lastly, he put forward a question for the LSOs and the networks how many of them are thinking about adaptation and doing adaptation activities now, which means local water management programmes, infrastructure programmes, and educational programmes, which organisations here are thinking in these terms?

Muhammad Tariq-President LSO Tootak from Khuzdar responded to Stephen and said that they have formed a disaster committee after the formation of their LSO, through this committee, they delivered CAT sessions, planted trees, worked on CPIs and through schemes, they have controlled water wastage. They have done discussions on building dams and intending to switch their electricity system to solar panels.



Asif Turangzai, Disaster Risk Management Specialist, Asian Development Bank

Mr Asif Turangzai elaborated,

“From 1997 to 2016 we have been working majorly on the disaster response. Our total portfolio was 2.5 billion dollars when we invested 1.2 billion dollars on earthquake as social energy, housing, transport and much more. However, after that, we changed the approach that we have to work on the preparation of these hazards. Therefore, we spent 525 million dollars and DRMF is one of the products of that. Therefore, in those 525 million dollars we have kept a slot for bringing NGOs, and LSOs into one platform. Because no NGO or LSO can work directly with Asian Development Bank. Therefore, we created this platform and we worked with five to six NGOs initially and that resulted in the best products at community level engagement which we would replicate in terms of lessons learnt”.



Mr Asif further added that they always include communities in their projects, and as per his personal experience, it is more beneficial. When banks interact with the LSOs, some requirements could not be met, because of the audit procedures and this is the only gap because of which they cannot directly interact with NGOs and LSOs. Communities have indigenous knowledge and they have academic knowledge therefore, keeping in view that RSPs can bridge this gap by giving them knowledge on

climate change. Until and unless this knowledge is not transferred to these communities in their local languages, this gap cannot be filled.

“I am thankful to RSPN for bringing all these NGOs under one platform today on a multilingual forum,” Mr Asif said.

Hina Lotia, Advisor Climate Change, World Bank

Ms Hina Lotia said what Mr Asif discussed that it is quite difficult for banks to work directly with the LSOs because of the various requirements that they have; even then, they try to consult LSOs through civil society organisations such as RSPN, HANDS, SRSO etc. they take knowledge from RSPs to develop their programs and projects.

She explained, ***“The World Bank climate change action plan has integrated all development sectors like agriculture etc. A major focus is on poverty eradication and shared prosperity. In our recent report, we have considered floods and noted down five critical pathways for more work in future. Those are agriculture, resilient buildings and liberal***



cities, institutional and policy alignment, and similarly, strengthening of human capital like family planning, social protection and the concept of just energy transition is under focus. The civil society platform on climate change has provided us consultation". She said that the report is available on the website. Recently, they have done post-disaster need assessment in collaboration with ADB, UN, World Bank and other organisations. The emphasis was given to 17 sectors, which focus on infrastructure, social sight, productive sectors, cross cuttings themes like climate change etc., to explore the impact of floods in these sectors and at what cost?

She mentioned that the major figures coming up from the assessment are as 14.9 billion USD in terms of post-disaster damage and 15.2 billion USD in terms of economic losses. In terms of needs for rehabilitation, it is 16.3 billion. She also said that they are designing a huge programme targeting Sindh, which is Sindh Flood Emergency and Rehabilitation Project having six important components such as infrastructure rehabilitation, livelihood support, small golden livestock, and rescue 1122, and agricultural food systems. They have done consultations with Sindh-based NGOs. She believes that the LSOs have a vital role, without them, the element of sustainability will always remain incomplete.

Bilal Anwar, Chief Executive Officer, National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF)

Mr Bilal Anwar appreciated the efforts, work, and achievements that the local communities have made at the local level. He expressed, *"We are actually living in a different scenario and very different dynamic right now which is a post-flood. I think in many ways it's not really appropriate to say post-flood because as mentioned by one of the colleagues from Sindh, who stated very passionately that still many areas are underwater and I am sure that's how it is. Therefore, we still pass through that calamity, talking about climate change and the disaster"*.

He further added, *"Looking at the Sindh presentations from this morning and hearing from the flow of today I must say that the understanding of climate change, the impact of disasters, the need for adaptation and what is needed to be done is very much there. I don't think that for Pakistan that the climate challenges the Pakistanis facing, I don't think we really need the very highly complex model to undertake any kind of work, I think what we need to do is to further strengthen the RSPN and LSOs and actually develop a lot more LSOs and community-based organisations. I think the basic level or basic understanding is there because these are the people who are actually facing the challenges, I think we need to learn from them instead of sitting here and coming up with solutions"*.



He said that the important lesson to learn is that after having done so much work at the ground level and in some of the very vulnerable areas but then at the same time when the floods came very unprecedented, it affected a large segment of society and almost one-third of Pakistan. Now the NDRM's flood protection structures many of them have been damaged as well and they are in the assessment exercise right now. What damages it has done to their work and how they can actually come up with the additional resources in order to reconstruct those damages?

Mujtaba, Senior Joint Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change



Mr Mujtaba stated, *“As you all know Pakistan has repeatedly been on the list of the top ten most vulnerable countries. 33 million people were affected by the floods in Pakistan, and more than 1800 people lost their lives. The loss of livestock was almost six lacs. The total loss caused by the floods according to the damage need assessment by the World Bank is more than 30 billion dollars”.*

He further said that Pakistan is not alone in this battle, there are many other countries including developed countries, which are at stake of damage by floods. If we see in terms of climate change, 35 countries are members of G77 in China, and Pakistan got the honour to be a chair of China. Therefore, Pakistan has the responsibility of not only Pakistan but also to all those countries who have been affected by the incidents of climate change, to project their point of view. After putting in so much effort, they have created a fund, which will be used in the

countries, which would face climate-impacted disasters, the funds will be provided immediately after the assessment of the impacts, and the mechanism as compared to other funding will be swifter, which is a big achievement for Pakistan. The ministry of Climate change has moved forward to make a National Adaptation Plan, which will help in developing better projects, and with the help of the community, these projects will be carried out.

Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks – Mr Shoab Sultan Khan

The LSO Convention was able to achieve its objectives successfully by providing a platform for the LSO representatives to understand the need for and importance of social mobilisation and share achievements of Community Institutions on poverty graduation of households and addressing SDGs, with the wider audience aiming to extend poverty graduation at a higher scale. The National Convention of LSOs 2022 helped the audience to understand the impact of climate change on rural communities in Pakistan and the role of community institutions in responding to the issue. It also provided an opportunity for the community leaders, government officials, and donors to interact with each other about the ground realities, the challenges and the possible measure, which can be taken in order to reduce poverty and control the impacts of climate change. The convention also acknowledged the support of the European Union in improving the livelihood conditions for rural communities of Pakistan.

Mr Shoab Sultan Khan, Chairman Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) congratulated the RSPN team on successfully conducting the event. He thanked everyone, especially those who have organised the National Convention of the LSOs and appreciated the efforts of the Programme Manager SUCCESS and his entire team. He said that the event would not have been successful if the members of the LSOs, who are here, have not accepted the notion and created this system. He appreciated the first and the most important work done by the community members whose representatives are here, without them and without the hard work of the support organisations including all RSPs, COs and all the staff it would never be possible to organise 80 lace households.

Appendix: Convention Agenda

Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN)

National Convention of Community Local Support Organisations (LSOs), 2022

13 December 2022, Marquee Hall, Marriott Hotel, Islamabad

Session I: The Role of LSOs in Poverty Graduation of Households and Addressing Sustainable Development Goals

Objective: To understand the need for and importance of social mobilisation and present achievements of Community Institutions on poverty graduation of households and addressing SDGs.

1000-1005	Recitation from the Holy Quran – Ms Samina Ashraf, RSPN
1005-1015	Introduction of the Participants by the Event Moderator – Mr Omer Farooq, RSPN
1015-1035	Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) <i>Rural Support Programmes' Approach and Experience of Implementing Poverty Graduation Programmes in Pakistan and South Asia</i>
	<i>Poverty Graduation and Addressing SDGs at the Local Level - The Experience of LSOs</i> <i>Presentations by LSO representatives</i> 1. Ms Maria Pratab Singh, General Secretary, LSO Dig Mori district Tando Muhammad Khan of the EU-funded SUCCESS Programme from National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) 2. Ms Saeeda, Chairperson, Kiran Falah Women Welfare LSO district Orakzai from Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) 3. Bastaj, CIF beneficiary, LSO Kiran Falah Women Welfare (SRSP)
1035-1205	<i>Presentations by LSOs on the Impact of 2022 Floods in Pakistan and their Response</i> 4. Ms Noor, Executive Body Member, LSO Footak
1400-1600	1. Ms Hafiza, Chairperson, LSO Fateh district Larkana from Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO) 2. Mr Feroz Baloch, President, LSO Footak district Khuzdar of the EU-funded BRACE Programme from Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) 3. Mr Abid Hussain, Finance Secretary, Akbar LSO district Jhal Magsi-Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) 5. Ms Zareena, President, Sheikh Iori LSO district Dadu of the EU-funded SUCCESS Programme from Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) 6. Ms Sajida Parveen, Manager, Muttariq Chauhan LSO district Dera Ghazi Khan from National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) 4. Short Documentary by SRSP on community response to climate change 6. Ms Zohra, LSO Muskaan (TRDP)
	7. Mr Sher Afzal Khan, Manager, Biyar LSO district Chitral from Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP)
1205-1215	<i>Planning Commission's Plan for Poverty Reduction in Pakistan</i> Mr Dawood Barech, Additional Secretary from Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Government of Pakistan
1215-1225	<i>Poverty Graduation Programmes of the RSPs</i> -Ms Shandana Khan, Chief Executive Officer RSPN
1225-1300	Documentary on the SUCCESS Programme and a presentation by Mr Bilal Naqeeb, Programme Manager, M&E RSPN, on <i>Key lessons from the EU-funded SUCCESS Programme in Sindh and BRACE Programme in Balochistan</i>
1300-1400	Lunch Break

Session II: Local Communities and Climate Change

	<p><i>Panel Discussion: Local Communities and Climate Change</i></p> <p><i>Panel Moderator: Ms Shandana Khan, Chief Executive Officer RSPN</i></p> <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr Stephen Langrell, Head of Section Rural Development, the European Union Delegation to Pakistan 2. Mr Asif Turangzai, Disaster Risk Management Specialist, Asian Development Bank, Islamabad 3. Ms Hina Lotia, Advisor Climate Change, World Bank, Islamabad 4. Mr Stephen Berlingutte, Deputy Director, USAID’s Office of Climate and Sustainable Growth 5. Mr Bilal Anwar, Chief Executive Officer National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) 6. Mr Mujtaba, Senior Joint Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change
1600-1645	Distribution of Shields to the presenting LSOs – RSP CEOs
1645-1650	Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks –Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman RSPN

Objective: To understand the impact of climate change on rural communities in Pakistan and the role of community institutions in responding to the issue