

RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN PAKISTAN

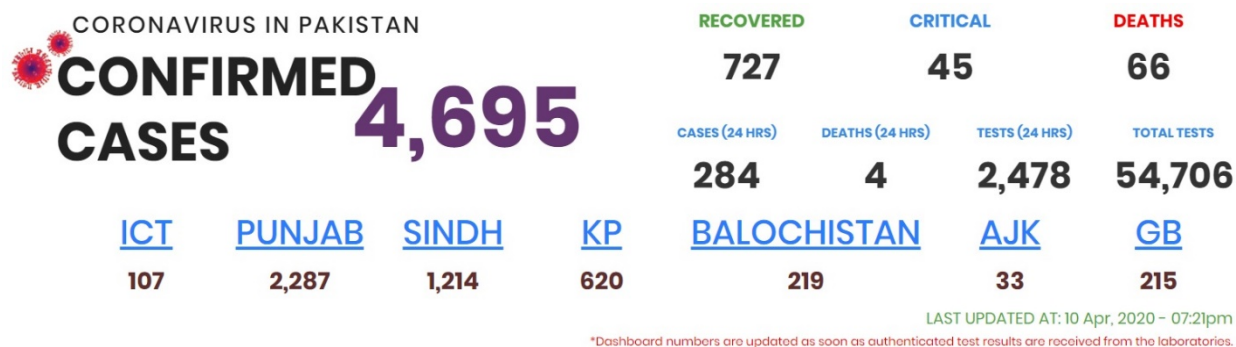
Friday: 10th April, 2020
By RSPN/RSP COVID-19 Response Teams

This is RSPN’s first report on the RSP response to COVID-19 in Pakistan. It includes examples from the response of rural communities that the RSPs work with ie rural community philanthropy, which has been extremely widespread. The advantage of the RSPs is their large, organised rural outreach. Over the past 35 years or so the RSPs have worked with over 50 million, rural households and their network is the largest, civil society network of Pakistan. This population has been a direct beneficiary of the nine RSPs that RSPN consists of and is organised into over 500,000 Community Organisations – hence the ‘organised’ RSP outreach is critical during these emergency conditions. These Community Organisations not only work with the RSPs, but with a host of different actors, especially the government.

As the COVID-19 pandemic reached Pakistan, the RSPs and the communities we work with have been involved in: awareness campaigns about the disease, doing sessions on preventive measures with Community Organisations, working closely with government to identify the most deserving people for relief programmes and support to government facilities established for dealing with COVID-19 outbreak.

COVID-19 Pandemic in Pakistan: the COVID-19 pandemic was confirmed to have reached Pakistan on 26th February 2020 when the first two cases were announced. As of 10th April 2020 the number of confirmed cases in the country was 4,695, with 727 recoveries and 66 deaths. A national lockdown was announced by the government on 27th March 2020 and continued till 15th April 2020. On 15th April the government announced a continuation of the lockdown, with some concessions to some industries to re-open. The following is a snapshot from a government dashboard (<http://covid.gov.pk/>).

The lockdown in urban areas appears to be much more strict, compared to most rural areas. RSPs have obtained permissions from government to be selectively mobile in order to facilitate government and other stakeholders to access rural communities with relief and to include them in key government relief programmes.



RSPN/RSPs response to COVID-19 in Pakistan: the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) is the largest civil society network of Pakistan, representing nine Rural Support Programmes¹ (RSPs) that are working with a mission to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods of the poor in Pakistan. RSPs have a large, national outreach. RSP work has been in 149 out of 156 districts of the country. RSPs have mobilised over 8,412,543 rural households (with an estimated population of about 54.7 million) into 496,352 neighbourhood level Community Organisations (COs), of which 53 percent are women's COs. These COs are federated at the village and union council levels and have formed 37,134 Village Organisations (VOs) and 2,184 Local Support Organisations (LSOs) at the Union Council level.

RSPN and RSPs have been at the forefront of relief and recovery efforts involving rural communities, in past natural and manmade disasters. RSPs were already present in a majority of these disaster affected areas, through the network of grassroots community organisations and a trained cadre of community activists and volunteers. RSPN and the RSPs have worked closely with communities following the 2005 earthquake, the IDP crisis of 2008 and 2014, droughts and floods in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014. RSPs have been supported by many donors and generously supported by Pakistani citizens who donated large amounts of funds and relief goods to rural communities. Donors during such operations have included USAID, AusAID, GTZ, UNDP, UNOCHA, PPAF, UNHCR, OSI, Government of Pakistan, WFP, DFID, Plan Pakistan, FAO, USAID/OFDA, UNICEF, DIAKONIE, Packard Foundation, Concern World Wide, ILO, PIFERP, OXFAM, Save the Children, amongst others. Following the 2005 earthquake, the RSPs provided 8,905 metric-tons of food items to affected families and assisted them in rebuilding 62,000 destroyed homes in KP alone. During the floods of 2010 and 2011, RSPs provided food, shelter, water & sanitation services, medical treatment, and livestock-care services to people.

The RSP strengths are:

- The largest 'organised' outreach to rural communities in 135 districts, through village-based Community Organisations and their clusters;
- A large work-force of community volunteers who are members of these Community Organisations;
- The largest programme for rural women in Pakistan;
- An effective outreach to communities in the remotest parts of Pakistan;
- Assisting government in identifying the most-needy and facilitate access to these;
- Providing information to communities on key government relief programmes eg the current Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme and the government's zakat programme;
- Providing relief goods and services through a large network of community activists, volunteers and resource persons;



Local Support Organisations formed by the #NRSP distributed ration, bought through community philanthropy, among poor households in #Sujawal district.

¹The RSPs included in the network are Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP), Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP), Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara (GBTI), Sindh Graduates Association (SGA), and Institute of Rural Management (IRM).

- Facilitating multiple stakeholders in accessing communities that require relief and economic rehabilitation assistance ie the corporate sector, philanthropists, etc.;
- Working with rural communities to raise awareness eg currently about COVID-19 and preventive measures;

Key highlights of the RSP work against COVID-19 response are as follows:

A. Our Outreach

RSPs are actively working with communities on awareness raising, prevention and economic relief following the lockdown. This work is being done in 115 districts across Pakistan, in 1,857 union councils through 33,156 community institutions, with a membership of 475,657. The anti-COVID-19 response is ongoing in all provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK in close collaboration with government. A matrix of RSP district outreach is given as follows and a completed list of outreach districts is given at Annex-I:

RSP	AJK	Baloch-istan	GB	KP	Punjab	Sindh	Total
Aga Khan RSP	-	-	7	-	-	-	7
Balochistan RSP	-	26	-	-	-	-	26
Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara	-	-	-	2	1	-	3
Institute of Rural Management	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
National RSP	10	3	-	1	15	4	33
Sindh Rural Support Organisation	-	-	-	-	-	14	14
Sarhad RSP	-	-	-	36	-	-	36
Thardeep Rural Development Programme	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Grand Total	10	29	7	39	17	23	115

B. Coordination with Government

RSPs and the community institutions are members of 659 committees and task forces set up by government at various levels. RSP staff and community activists have assisted government in accessing communities for relief purposes, in identifying the poorest households eligible for food rations, zakat, medicines and other non-food essential items. For example, the Balochistan RSP (BRSP) and the Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) are active members of task-forces/special-committees set up by the Health Department of the Balochistan government and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Sindh. An impressive 505 community activists (heads of Local Support Organisations), Community Resource Persons (CRPs) and community leaders are notified as members of COVID-19 special-committees formed by district and tehsil authorities in Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan.

C. Work with Rural Communities

RSP staff and community activists are taking safety messages to communities. Critical messages of hand washing and social distancing are being conveyed. In some places, hygiene kits are being provided. Messages have gone to 33,156 Community



Social distancing in meetings with Community Resource Persons #CRPs under #EU funded SUCCESS Programme to raise awareness to #FightCOVID19 in UC #Gajidero of District

Institutions, through 10,419 community activists and leaders (3,690 men and 6,729 women) trained by the RSPs. Messages are also being relayed through text messages, in Urdu and local languages. Community meetings are taking place observing 'distancing.' Unfortunately, large community meetings are not possible at this stage.

The RSPs are also encouraging rural women, trained in vocational skills, to stitch cloth masks. This is being done by women's organisations in ICT, Punjab, Balochistan and Sindh. A total of 67,499 masks have been made by 9,892 community members (2,148 men and 7,744 women) and distributed among communities. RSPs have also arranged 28,112 face-masks by mobilising resources from government authorities and other stakeholders, and provided these to communities.

D. In Towns and Cities

To spread awareness about the disease and preventive measures, RSPs are also working in some towns and cities. This includes disseminating printed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material ie leaflets, brochures and pamphlets and announcements through mobile loudspeakers, in local mosques, through FM radio and on local cable TV networks. Posters and banners with appropriate messaging have also been displayed, including on the gateway to Pakistan, ie on the famous Bab-e-Khyber.



E. Cash transfer and in-kind support to poor households

RSPs are encouraging communities to help the most-needy, marginalised and vulnerable households amongst them. The organised communities are demonstrating a true self-help and community philanthropy by helping the most-vulnerable segments of the society. Members of community institutions, who are poor people themselves, are buying rations for the poorest, using their savings for this or collecting funds to feed the poorest in their villages.

The RSPs are also facilitating the private sector and philanthropists by identifying the most-needy households, to provide food, cash grants and other essential non-food items. A total of 5,374 poor households have been given cash-grants of PKR 18.37 million for emergency use and purchase of essential food and non-food items. A total of 68,727 poor families have been provided food rations, soap, sanitisers worth PKR 51.20 million. This support is coming from the corporate sector, from charitable organisations and from local authorities.

Facilitating Communities in Applying for Government Programmes ie Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme:The Pakistan government has launched a mammoth cash transfer programme to mitigate the economic impact of the lockdown. The Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme is to cover 12 million



families, providing a one-time grant of PKR 12,000 per family, with a total budget of Rs. 144 billion. The programme is managed by the government’s division of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and is the country’s largest digital based social protection initiative, with applications for the programme being done through telephones.

Trained CRPs under the #EU funded #SUCCESS Programme are facilitating the organised poor households in their registration with #EHSAAAS Emergency Cash Programme in Sindh.

To facilitate government in this initiative, RSP staff and community activists have assisted poor households to

apply for the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme. As of 10th April 2020, a total of 218,798 poor and poorest households have been facilitated in registration them with the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme.

F. Support to Quarantine Centres and Health Facilities

RSPs have provided cooked food, surgical-masks, sanitisers and soap to 135 quarantine centers set-up by government. They have supported 1,907 public and private medical health facilities by providing them medicines, surgical-masks, sanitisers and soap. A total of 28,945 surgical-masks, 9,465 hand-sanitizers and 38,548 soaps have been provided to these entities. These initiatives have been undertaken by BRSP, NRSP, TRDP and SRSP using their own resources, following requests from government.

G. Stay connected with RSPN for COVID-19 response

- RSPN website: <http://www.rspn.org/>
- RSPN COVID-19 page: <http://www.rspn.org/index.php/covid-19/>
- Facebook: <https://web.facebook.com/RSPNPakistan/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RSPNPakistan>

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Annex-I: List of RSP Districts with Anti COVID-19 Response

No.	Name of District	Province/ Region	RSP
1	Astore	GB	AKRSP
2	Ghanche	GB	AKRSP
3	Ghizer	GB	AKRSP
4	Gilgit	GB	AKRSP
5	Hunza	GB	AKRSP
6	Nagar	GB	AKRSP
7	Skardu	GB	AKRSP
8	Barkhan	Balochistan	BRSP
9	Bolan	Balochistan	BRSP
10	Chaghi	Balochistan	BRSP
11	Dera Bugti	Balochistan	BRSP
12	Harnai	Balochistan	BRSP
13	Jaffarabad	Balochistan	BRSP
14	Jhal Magsi	Balochistan	BRSP
15	Kharan	Balochistan	BRSP
16	Khuzdar	Balochistan	BRSP
17	Killa Abdullah	Balochistan	BRSP
18	Killa Saifullah	Balochistan	BRSP
19	Kohlu	Balochistan	BRSP
20	Lehri	Balochistan	BRSP
21	Loralai	Balochistan	BRSP
22	Mastung	Balochistan	BRSP
23	Musa Khel	Balochistan	BRSP
24	Naseerabad	Balochistan	BRSP
25	Noshki	Balochistan	BRSP
26	Pishin	Balochistan	BRSP
27	Quetta	Balochistan	BRSP
28	Sherani	Balochistan	BRSP
29	Sibi	Balochistan	BRSP
30	Sohbarpur	Balochistan	BRSP
31	Washuk	Balochistan	BRSP
32	Zhob	Balochistan	BRSP
33	Ziarat	Balochistan	BRSP
34	Haripur	KP	GBTI
35	Swabi	KP	GBTI
36	Attock	Punjab	GBTI
37	Lahore	Punjab	IRM
38	Jamshoro	Sindh	IRM
39	Bagh	AJK	NRSP
40	Bhimber	AJK	NRSP
41	Hattian	AJK	NRSP
42	Haveli	AJK	NRSP

No.	Name of District	Province/ Region	RSP
43	Kotli	AJK	NRSP
44	Mirpur	AJK	NRSP
45	Muzaffarabad	AJK	NRSP
46	Neelum	AJK	NRSP
47	Poonch	AJK	NRSP
48	Sudhnoti	AJK	NRSP
49	Kech / Turbat	Balochistan	NRSP
50	Lasbella	Balochistan	NRSP
51	Panjgoor	Balochistan	NRSP
52	Malakand P.A	KP	NRSP
53	Attock	Punjab	NRSP
54	Bahawalnagar	Punjab	NRSP
55	Bahawalpur	Punjab	NRSP
56	Bhakkar	Punjab	NRSP
57	Chakwal	Punjab	NRSP
58	Dera Ghazi Khan	Punjab	NRSP
59	Jhelum	Punjab	NRSP
60	Khushab	Punjab	NRSP
61	Layyah	Punjab	NRSP
62	Mandi Bahauddin	Punjab	NRSP
63	Mianwali	Punjab	NRSP
64	Rahim Yar Khan	Punjab	NRSP
65	Rajanpur	Punjab	NRSP
66	Rawalpindi	Punjab	NRSP
67	Vehari	Punjab	NRSP
68	Matari	Sindh	NRSP
69	Sujawal	Sindh	NRSP
70	Tando Allahyar	Sindh	NRSP
71	Tando Muhammad Khan	Sindh	NRSP
72	Badin	Sindh	SRSO
73	Ghotki	Sindh	SRSO
74	Jacobabad	Sindh	SRSO
75	Kashmore	Sindh	SRSO
76	Khairpur	Sindh	SRSO
77	Larkana	Sindh	SRSO
78	Mirpur Khas	Sindh	SRSO
79	Naushero Feroz	Sindh	SRSO
80	Sanghar	Sindh	SRSO
81	Shahdad Kot	Sindh	SRSO
82	Shikarpur	Sindh	SRSO
83	Sukkur	Sindh	SRSO
84	Thatta	Sindh	SRSO
85	Umer Kot	Sindh	SRSO

No.	Name of District	Province/ Region	RSP
86	Abbottabad	KP	SRSP
87	Bajaur NMD	KP	SRSP
88	Bannu	KP	SRSP
89	Battagram	KP	SRSP
90	Buner	KP	SRSP
91	Charsadda	KP	SRSP
92	Chitral	KP	SRSP
93	D.I.Khan	KP	SRSP
94	Dir Lower	KP	SRSP
95	Dir Upper	KP	SRSP
96	Hangu	KP	SRSP
97	Haripur	KP	SRSP
98	Karak	KP	SRSP
99	Khyber NMD	KP	SRSP
100	Kohat	KP	SRSP
101	Kohistan	KP	SRSP
102	Kurram NMD	KP	SRSP
103	Lakki Marwat	KP	SRSP
104	Malakand P.A	KP	SRSP
105	Mansehra	KP	SRSP
106	Mardan	KP	SRSP
107	Mohmand NMD	KP	SRSP
108	North Waziristan NMD	KP	SRSP
109	Nowshera	KP	SRSP
110	Orakzai NMD	KP	SRSP
111	Peshawar	KP	SRSP
112	Shangla	KP	SRSP
113	South Waziristan NMD	KP	SRSP
114	Swat	KP	SRSP
115	T.A..AdjD.I.KhanDistt	KP	SRSP
116	T.A.AdjBannuDistt	KP	SRSP
117	T.A.Adj Kohat Distt	KP	SRSP
118	T.A.AdjLakki Marwat Distt	KP	SRSP
119	T.A.Adj Peshawar Distt	KP	SRSP
120	T.A.Adj Tank Distt	KP	SRSP
121	Tank	KP	SRSP
122	Dadu	Sindh	TRDP
123	Jamshoro	Sindh	TRDP
124	Tharparkar	Sindh	TRDP
125	Umer Kot	Sindh	TRDP

Annex-II: Consolidated Report on RSPs Response to COVID-19 Pandemic in Pakistan

Sr.	Performance Indicators	Grand Total	AKRSP	BRSP	GBTI	IRM	NRSP	SRSO	SRSP	TRDP
A. Coordination with government authorities										
1	Number of task-forces/special-committees set up by the federal and provincial authorities with <u>active membership of RSPs</u> for coordination and response to COVID-19 outbreak;	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
2	Number of task-forces/special-committees set up by the divisional, district and tehsil authorities with <u>active membership of RSPs</u> for coordination and response to COVID-19 outbreak;	152	12	25	-	-	10	82	-	23
3	Number of special-committees with active membership of LSO activists, CRPs and community leaders set-up by the district and tehsil authorities and other entities for COVID-19 response coordination arrangements;	505	21	-	9	-	22	335	-	118
B. Outreach and scale of RSPs response										
4	RSPs outreach and scale of response to COVID-19 outbreak:									
4.1	Number of districts	115	7	26	3	2	33	14	36	4
4.2	Number of tehsils	275	23	70	4	2	96	64	-	16
4.3	Number of urban towns and cities	449	92	37	8	2	181	99	-	30
4.4	Number of UCs	1,857	101	294	22	5	772	459	-	204
C. Community engagement and capacity building										
5	Number of community volunteers (community leaders, CRPs, etc.) trained on public awareness campaigns and preventive measures from COVID-19 pandemic;	10,419	20	1,522	56	-	6,160	1,313	813	535
5.1	Male	3,690	18	1,014	42	-	1,929	349	91	247
5.2	Female	6,729	2	508	14	-	4,231	964	722	288
6	Number of Community Institutions (LSOs, VOs, COs) engaged to undertake COVID-19 awareness campaigns and response activities (please also attach the list of COs/ VOs/ LSOs);	33,156	64	8	297	-	17,975	9,754	-	5,058

Sr.	Performance Indicators	Grand Total	AKRSP	BRSP	GBTI	IRM	NRSP	SRSO	SRSP	TRDP
6.1	Local Support Organisations (LSOs)	898	62	8	13	-	419	287	-	109
6.2	Village Organisations (VOs)	4,811	-	-	44	-	2,139	1,633	-	995
6.3	Communitate Organisations (COs)	27,447	2	-	240	-	15,417	7,834	-	3,954
	D. Community awareness for preparedness for COVID-19 outbreak									
7	Number of IEC material distributed/displayed in communities for community awareness raising and community engagement in mitigating the spread of coronavirus;	116,881	57	34,383	10,000	-	63,758	6,426	357	1,900
7.1	Number of pamphlets, brochures & leaflet distributed	98,354	-	26,350	10,000	-	54,145	6,359	-	1,500
7.2	Number of banners displayed	991	57	33	-	-	402	63	236	200
7.3	Number of posters displayed	17,536	-	8,000	-	-	9,211	4	121	200
8	Number of awareness campaigns undertaken on COVID-19 outbreak and preventive measures using mobile loudspeakers, announcements in local mosques and other local methods;	53,517	50	5,074	364	-	30,433	2,130	10,651	4,815
8.1	Number of announcements made using mobile speakers	20,023	8	2,992	1	-	4,939	468	10,620	995
8.2	Number of announcements made using local mosques/ churches/ mandirs/ others	18,561	31	775	350	-	16,256	129	25	995
8.3	Number of sessions undertaken with communities	14,933	11	1,307	13	-	9,238	1,533	6	2,825
9	Number of community members made face-masks at home for their use and to meet local demands;	9,892	-	361	8	-	6,866	657	-	2,000
9.1	Male	2,148	-	242	7	-	549	50	-	1,300
9.2	Female	7,744	-	119	1	-	6,317	607	-	700
9.3	Number of face-masks made by the community members	67,499	2,500	6,386	625	-	51,937	4,051	-	2,000
9.4	Number of masks provided by RSPs to communities	28,112	-	15,397	-	-	7,565	4,650	-	500
10	Number of families/households provided assistance in their registration with the GoPak's Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme ;	218,798	-	3,030	-	-	77,681	126,090	-	11,997

Sr.	Performance Indicators	Grand Total	AKRSP	BRSP	GBTI	IRM	NRSP	SRSO	SRSP	TRDP
E. Cash transfer and in-kind support to poor and poorest households										
11	Number of poor and poorest households provided cash-grants for emergency use, consumptions and purchase of essential food and non-food items;	5,374	-	2,300	199	-	1,699	919	-	257
12	Total amount (PKR in million) of cash-grants provided to poor and poorest households;	18.37	-	2.50	0.44	-	9.05	0.90	-	5.48
13	Number of poor and poorest households provided in-kind support ie essential food items, soaps, sanitizers, etc.	68,727	34	2,247	11,075	320	20,085	11,520	-	23,446
14	Total amount (PKR in million) of in-kind support provided to poor and poorest households;	51.20	0.08	0.74	9.80	1.00	30.59	2.75	-	6.26
F. RSPs support to government health facilities										
15	Number of quarantine centers set-up by local authorities and private entities supported by provision of cooked food, surgical-masks, sanitisers and soap;	135	42	85	-	-	4	4	-	-
16	Number of public and private medical health facilities supported by provision of medicines, surgical-masks, sanitisers and soap;	1,907	-	794	-	-	1,030	-	11	72
17	Number of <u>surgical-masks provided</u> to these public and private centers	28,945	34	26,161	-	-	1,000	-	1,750	-
18	Number of <u>hand-sanitizers provided</u> to these public and private centers	9,465	34	9,290	-	-	29	100	-	12
19	Number of <u>soaps provided</u> to these public and private centers	38,548	34	20,380	-	-	1,330	3,800	2,078	10,926