



Rural Communities in the Fight Against **COVID-19**

Strengthening the Citizen-State Relationship

**Update on RSP Collaboration with 66 District Administrations
(1500 Union Councils) (Community Mobilisation for TTQ)**

14 September 2020 (fortnightly update)



4th July 2020: Prime Minister Imran Khan awards two women activists from the National Rural Support Programme for outstanding work in rural ICT against COVID-19, marking 100 days of the National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC).

Shabana and Shagufta are the two activists trained by NRSP and the ICT Health Department under an MOU between District Administration ICT and NRSP. The activists spread awareness about COVID-19 in their villages and will help government in contact tracing and identifying suspected cases. Shabana and Shagufta belong to Community Local Support Organisation (LSO) Chirah.

Scope of NCOC collaboration with RSPs



Pakistan's first, organised community-led response in rural areas to the **COVID-19 emergency**



This unique public-private partnership between **the GOP and community Local Support Organisations (LSOs)** created by RSPs, is strengthening citizen-state links. LSOs are union council-level community institutions



In **1500** union councils of 66 districts seven RSPs are entering into agreements with district administrations as a public service, linking LSOs to government to battle COVID-19;



The work is happening in **all provinces, AJK and GB**, with the Health Department training community activists (women and men) in awareness about COVID-19, related preventive measures, contact tracing and reporting of suspicious cases (TTQ) to the Health Department;



About **20 million** people will benefit from this collaboration.

Geographic outreach of RSP-NCOC collaboration

Ref.	Province/ Region	No. of Districts	No. of LSOs / Rural UCs	Name of RSP
A	Azad Jammu & Kashmir	8	127	NRSP
B	Balochistan	11	223	NRSP, BRSP
C	Gilgit-Baltistan	9	58	AKRSP
D	Islamabad Capital Territory	1	5	NRSP
E	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa	7	141	SRSP, NRSP, GBTI, AKRSP
F	Punjab	14	406	NRSP
G	Sindh	16	540	SRSO, NRSP, TRDP
Total		66	1,500	7 RSPs

Signing of MOUs between Provincial/District Authorities & RSPs

S. No	Province	Total No of Districts for NCOC Collaboration	No of Districts and No of MOUs Signed with RSP	No of District Level Coordination Meetings Held
1	Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK)	8	8 [AJK level MOU covering all 8 districts]	16
2	Balochistan	11	12 MOUs for 11 Districts *	65
3	Gilgit Baltistan (GB)	9	8	37
4	Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)	1	1	5
5	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)	7	10 for 7 Districts **	35
6	Punjab	14	14 ***	70
7	Sindh	16	17 MOUs & 1 Letter for 16 Districts ****	103
Total		66	70 MOUs & 1 Supporting Letter for 65 Districts	331

* Duki is a recently created district from Loralai, therefore a separate MOU signed with Duki's administration to work with LSOs was included in Loralai district.

** SRSP & NRSP have signed an MOU with DC of Mardan, similarly SRSP & GBTI signed an MOU with DC Haripur, 2 MOUs signed for Chitral (Upper & Lower)

*** For Muzaffargarh, a tehsil-level MOU is signed with Assistant Commissioner - Jatoi

**** SRSO & NRSP have signed an MOU each with DCs of Badin & Thatta along-with a letter issued by district administration of Tando Allah Yar to work with NRSP on NCOC collaboration

RSP staff & community activists oriented/trained by district authorities

Sr.	Province/RSP	Number and Type of Training Organised by District Authorities	No of RSP Staff Trained			No of Community Activists Trained (ie LSO Leaders and Community Resource Persons (CRPs))			No of UCs
			Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	
1	Balochistan (BRSP)	6 Events of Training on Protection Measures against COVID-19 and TTQ	22	24	46	40	25	65	65
2	AJK, ICT, Balochistan, Punjab, KP, Sindh (NRSP)	462 Events of Training on Combating COVID-19	69	207	276	4,219	2,586	6,805	368
3	Gilgit-Baltistan (AKRSP)	One Event of Training of Master Trainers on Gender Violence, Mental Health & Infant Young Child Feeding	-	-	-	12	12	24	12
4	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (SRSP)	37 Events of Training on COVID-19 Awareness and TTQ	1	6	7	140	541	681	37
5	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (GBTI)	One Event on SOPs for COVID-19 and Tracing/Tracking of Suspected Cases	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
6	Sindh (SRSO)	56 Events of Training on COVID-19 Precautionary Measures Awareness	22	22	44	286	9	295	55
Total		559 events organised. Content includes public awareness and TTQ	114	261	375	4,697	3,173	7,870	537

Activities conducted by trained LSO leaders and Community Resource Persons (CRPs)

Sr.	Province/RSP	Activities Done	No of LSOs involved. UC Level	No of Revenue Villages Covered	Total Beneficiary Population			Total No. of Community Activists Involved in Activities		
					Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
1	Balochistan (BRSP)	1) Awareness sessions, 2) Mosque and mobile announcements, 3) IEC material distribution	96	120	18,320	30,191	48,511	119	239	358
2	AJK, ICT, Balochistan, Punjab, KP, Sindh (NRSP)	1) Public awareness campaigns, 2) Implementation of TTQ strategy, 3) Mosque and mobile announcements, 4) IEC material distribution	800	3,212	1,030,126	825,001	1,855,127	4,265	2,660	6,925
3	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (GBTI)	1) Public awareness campaigns, 2) Mosque and mobile announcements, 3) IEC material distribution,	5	25	23,280	23,320	46,600	20	77	97
4	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (SRSP)	1) Public awareness campaigns, 2) Mosque and mobile announcements, 3) Radio and SMS Campaigns,	27	135	23,843	28,557	52,400	200	678	878
5	Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral and Chitral (AKRSP)	1) Public awareness campaigns, 2) Implementation of TTQ strategy, 3) Mosque and mobile announcements, 4) IEC material distribution	127	381	92,672	88,867	181,539	493	269	762
6	Sindh (SRSO)	1) Public awareness campaigns, 2) Social protection, 3) IEC material distribution, 4) Implementation of TTQ strategy	283	849	126,962	11,017	137,978	374	102	476
Total			1,338	4,722	1,315,203	1,006,953	2,322,155	5,471	4,025	9,496

List of community awareness and TTQ activities conducted by community activists



256

(34% women) suspected cases identified and referred to health department *



57

(54% women) contacts traced through 9 COVID cases on request of ICT health department



665,877

(60% women) benefited from community awareness raising sessions



1,143,945

(55% women) provided IEC materials (pamphlets, brochures, leaflets, banners, posters)



496,555

(57% women) individuals reached via mosque announcements and mobile announcements for enhancing community awareness on COVID-19 and preventive measures



15,465

individuals **(42% women)** benefited from COVID-19 awareness campaigns via Radio and SMS

List of other activities undertaken by communities through linkages with government authorities, other development organisations



17,027

(70% women) face-masks distributed



186,469

poorest families supported to access public social protection initiatives



77,659

poorest families provided in-kind support ie essential food items, soaps, sanitizer



9,500

(29% women) benefited from hand-washing facilities created

Scaling-up



Current **1500 UCs in 66 districts** are being done at RSP cost



RSPN has submitted a **proposal to NCOC on 8 July 2020 for scale-up in 4,757 UCs of 112 rural districts** (62 additional districts plus 50 from Phase-I collaboration in UCs not covered earlier)



Government will be able to leverage on the RSP outreach of community organisations, **reaching a total of 118 million rural people** with a total budget of PKR 7.5 billion for a one-year period



The per **district cost of scale-up will be Rs 67 million and the per UC cost will be Rs 1.6 million** for a one-year period.

*[146 Hunza-Nagar, 83 ICT, 10 Kashmore (Sindh), 5 Mardan (KP), 4 Haripur (KP), 4 Abbottabad (KP), 2 Larkana (Sindh), and 2 Duki (Balochistan)]

Case studies on community leaders' work

Case study 1: Ms Ghulam Zohran, LSO Rahbar, UC Jhulari 11, District Mirpurkhas, Sindh

Training: Ms Ghulam Zohran received training on community awareness and tracing COVID-19 suspected cases from the officials of district health department and the event was organised by SRSO.

Activities:

- Conducted awareness sessions on behavioural changes and taking precautionary measures to prevent spread of COVID-19 at CO and VO level;
- Undertaken awareness sessions with 140 households in 8 villages focusing preventive measures against COVID-19;
- Distributed 70 soaps among 70 poorest families for keeping practice of washing hands frequently;
- Distributed 120 printed brochures among community members provided by the district administration;
- Arranged ration bags with support of COs/VOs and distributed among 5 poor and vulnerable families;

Community Response: CO members are appreciating the training and follow-up support provided by the district health department and SRSO, it enabled them to take actions for preventing spread of COVID-19 pandemic in their area.

Challenges: people are becoming less careful about practicing preventive measures to avoid COVID-19 because no one yet infected by the virus in her UC.



Case 2: Ms Samrina Nazar, Activist LSO Nine Star Women Organisation (NSWO), Oshikhandas, Gilgit

Training: Ms Samrina Nazar received a three-day training on conveying messages to community members on taking precautionary measures to prevent spread of COVID-19, gender-based violence, mental health and infant and young child feeding. The training was organised and facilitated by AKRSP.

Activities: Ms Samrina developed an inventory of key words and 3 minutes' speech on each theme of public awareness campaigns in local languages of Shina and Brushashki, and spread key messages on COVID-19 among all villages on loudspeaker. She also delivered awareness sessions both at hamlets levels and at doorsteps of 450 families. She also stitched and distributed face-masks among poorest community members.

Community Response: Women appreciated messages related to COVID-19 preventive measures, gender violence, mental health and hygiene. Both men and women agreed to spread the awareness messages to more people in their respective areas. They also committed to adopt proper hand washing methods and try to ensure social distancing.

Challenges: she came across 4 cases of gender violence and mental stress is very common in her locality. For solution, she proposed to engage communities for longer term. This creates comfort zone for communicating cases of anxiety and violence.



Lessons, Challenges & Recommendations

- **District Health Department and activists link needs strengthening:** the Department needs to be regularly in touch with activists who are identifying suspected cases and contact tracing.
- **There is no facilitation in testing:** Testing facilities are non-existent in rural areas. Testing facility in Balochistan only in Quetta.
- Some cases are not reported in most areas as people fear they will be quarantined in hospitals and centres, by government. **With increasing awareness about home quarantine, people are less apprehensive. SOPs on home quarantine and self isolation need greater attention at this stage. This requires better link with Health Departments in districts.**
- There is a general **lack of awareness about COVID-19 in rural areas.** Once given information, people's response is overall positive and they are beginning to practice SOPs.
- **Easing/ending of lockdown** does make it more difficult for activists to convince more people to observe preventive measures. However, the government's steps for observing serious smart-lockdown on Ashura would help to contain the spread of COVID-19.
- **Many district Health Departments have no training material.** RSPs doing this at their own cost in many districts.
- **Provincial & district authorities have started realising the importance of community institutions** fostered by RSPs, for the delivery of other services eg EPI campaigns, polio campaigns, family planning, etc.
- **There is increased pressure on rural women due to unemployment of men and its impacts.** Domestic violence against women and children has increased;
- **RSPs are supporting NCOC collaboration through other, government and foreign donor funded projects eg training material, provision of soap, masks. Scale-up,** if required, can only be done through providing RSPs with resources.

Proposed Geographic Scale-Up of RSP Collaboration

Province	Implementing RSP	No of Districts	No of Union Councils	Estimated Households (Population Census 2017)	Estimated Population (Population Census 2017)
AJK	NRSP	8	68	533,483	3,392,671
Balochistan	NRSP, BRSP	23	410	1,169,321	7,550,240
GB*	AKRSP	10	97	198,444	1,538,905
ICT	NRSP	1	7	165,246	991,747
KP	NRSP, SRSP, AKRSP	20	743	2,866,568	21,579,762
Punjab	NRSP	35	2,869	10,714,102	69,625,144
Sindh	NRSP, SRSO	15	563	1,898,286	12,984,135
Grand Total	5 RSPs	112	4,757	17,545,450	117,662,603

BRSP: IEC Material with Key COVID-19 Awareness Messages Distributed by Women and Men Community Resources Persons (CRPs) in 16 union councils of Jaffarabad and Quetta



GBTI: Women Community Activist Leading the Awareness Campaign to Fight Against COVID-19 in Rural Activities of UC/Tehsil Hazro of District Attocak (Punjab)



SRSO: Community Awareness Sessions about COVID-19 Precautionary Measures in Sindh



Shikarpur



Khairpur



Kashmore at Kandhkot



Badin



Ms Meher Ul Nissa, an elected Councilor and a frontline Community Activist in Fight Against COVID-19 Pandemic with Support of NRSP in Village Memon Ki Wasi, UC and District Matiari, Sindh



The Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Appreciated the Efforts of NRSP and Community Activists/Leaders to Fight Against COVID-19 in Rural Islamabad through his Official Twitter Account



Website: www.rspn.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RSPNPakistan>
Twitter: https://twitter.com/RSPN_PK
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/rspnpakistan>