

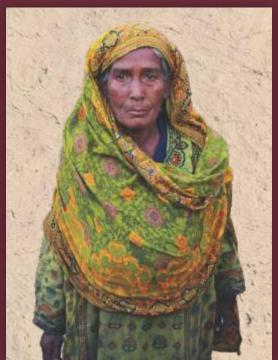




INSIGHTS

JHAL MAGSI















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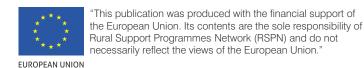
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INSIGHTS JHAL MAGSI



THE INSIGHTS FROM THE BRACE PROGRAMME

Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme completes its five years in 2022. The Programme is currently in its No-Cost Extension (NCE) phase. In the inception phase, the Rural Support Programmes Network, (RSPN), the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), and the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) conducted a widespread Poverty Scorecard (PSC) census which helped with the identification of the potential beneficiaries according to their poverty status. This European Union-funded Programme is the largest community empowerment programme in Balochistan and it covers 240 rural union councils in ten districts: namely Chaman, Duki, Jhal Magsi, Kech, Killa Abdullah, Khuzdar, Loralai, Pishin, Washuq, and Zhob. This document focuses on district Jhal Magsi and presents stories and profiles from the community leaders and field teams.

The journey through these five years is documented in the form of stories from the field after multiple activities. These human-interest stories have been titled "The Insights of BRACE" which reflects the efforts taken by the community members and the implementing teams in helping each other tumbling their household-level issues and taking a step toward reducing the poverty in each district under the BRACE Programme.

RSPN's BRACE documentation team worked with the respective RSP teams to reach out to the beneficiaries and obtain a story of the transformations the BRACE Programme has facilitated. This series does not only focus on the financial empowerment of the community members but also reflects on the legal and economic empowerment in the target districts of the programme.

Preface

With its vast geography, Balochistan has abundant mineral and energy resources, untapped human potential, and offers opportunities to change the existing situation. However, Balochistan's population suffers disproportionately compared to the rest of the country. This is due to the inequitable distribution of resources, political instability, weak public policies, poor governance, displacements due to security issues, and a burdening influx of refugees.

The Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme, funded by the European Union (EU), is a strategic development initiative to alleviate rural poverty by building on community mobilisation and citizen empowerment. Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) provide social, technical, and financial assistance to improve and expand income sources for targeted community households.

In collaboration with the BRSP, the beneficiaries interviewed under the BRACE programme in district Jhal Magsi provided insight into how the idea of community-driven development is realised and how it has benefited the people in the district.

The focus of BRACE is to enable poor rural men and women to reduce poverty at the household level through social organisations. This starts at a small level, organising Community Organisations (COs) among neighbouring households, and at the larger village level bringing them together into Village Organisations (VOs) to deal with village problems. VOs eventually gained enough momentum to establish Local Support Organisations (LSOs) at the Union Council level, some of which became a member of the Joint District Development

Committee (JDDC) at the Tehsil and District levels in which there is the participation of the line departments and the district authorities which directly bring to the attention of local governments and negotiate with them. The insights of the BRACE programme bring a series of stories of the beneficiaries as well as the implementation team with a focus on the challenges they face during the execution of the BRACE Programme.

JHAL MAGSI (2017-22)



21,322 Number of Households with PSC survey completed



15,032No. of Households Organised



No. of community members trained in CMST



Women (44%)



No. of COs formed



616 No. of Female COs (46%)



Number of Community members trained in LMST



Women (48%)



oo 376
No. of VOs formed



155 No. of Female VOs (41%)



56 Number of community members trained as Communty Resource Persons (CRPs)



Women (46%)



No. of LSOs formed





376Number of HHs Benefiting from Completed CPIs



1,887
Individual Beneficiaries of Completed CPIs



7.7 million (PKR)
Total amount of sub-grants for CPI with VOs



Number of LSOs managing CIF



Number of HH benefiting from CIF



125
Number of community
members Trained in TVET



16 million (PKR) Total amount of CIF with LSOs



6.7 million(PKR)

Total amount of CIF disbursed to poor households by VOs/LSOs (0-23)



220

No. of beneficiaries received assistive devices



159





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VILLAGE ORGANISATION (VO)

GHULAM NABI VILLAGE MIRPUR

Mirpur is a village located in the sub-tehsil Mirpur of Jhal Magsi district. Agriculture and livestock are the main sources of livelihood in the area but this region is in the grip of feudalistic economy and only a few people have their agricultural land or domestic animals of their own. Other people work for daily wages to earn for their families and Ghulam Nabi is one of them.

Being a father of six, Nabi has to work more than the usual working hours to meet the household expenses.

After the introduction of the European Union (EU) funded programme BRACE, Ghulam Nabi along with his fellow villagers formed a Village Organisation (VO) in 2020 and named it Mirpur. He serves this VO as the General Secretary (GS) since its formation.

"As part of the VO, I conduct awareness sessions on a monthly basis and we do have

awareness sessions in between if needed", Nabi shared while describing his role as the office bearer of the VO.

He told us that people were unaware of the role of BRSP and other organisations working in the town so being part of the organisation, he spread awareness and tried to mobilise people for their development needs.

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As a team, we are also running awareness campaigns regarding education especially girls' education in the town.

"We conduct VO meetings, and each member is given the opportunity to put his opinion and suggestions which are beneficial for the residents, and then a collective decision is taken and later shared with the Local Support Organisation (LSO) for further action", Nabi stated. "And the water purification plant installed by UNICEF is a result of one such collective effort and decision".

One of Nabi's sons is suffering from an unknown disease that has made him unable to walk. We suspect it could be polio but it has never been officially diagnosed due to lack of health services in the area. He is fourteen and has to live with the pain for the rest of his life.

The resource he and his family had, were already spent on the unsuccessful treatment of his son and he lost hope. In the meantime, the VO took the initiative of registering physically disabled people with the social welfare department of the Government of Balochistan so they can be supported with assistive devices whenever available.

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I took this step with the support of my team because I did not want anyone to suffer as I and my family suffered in a time of need.



LOCAL SUPPORT ORGANISATION (LSO)

MUHAMMAD ASLAM LSO MIRPUR, UNION COUNCIL (UC) GANDHAWA

"Being a schoolteacher and social worker at the same time, I need a lot of energy for my thankless job", shared Muhammad Aslam with a long sigh.

Aslam lives in village Mirpur, district Jhal Magsi. He is into social work for the last ten years and tries to serve his community whenever he gets a chance.

Aslam, who has a master's degree in International Relations from the University of Balochistan, started his professional career as a primary school teacher (PST) back in 2010 when the Government of Balochistan decided to provide jobs to the unemployed graduates of Balochistan through the Aghaze-Haqooq-e-Balochistan package.

He worked as a primary school teacher for five years before getting an appointment through the National Testing Service (NTS) as 66

I chose teaching as a profession because I wanted to have an impact on society by training more teachers in the town as education is an immediate need of the youth.

an Elementary School Teacher (EST) in 2015 and is the only teacher available in the school of his village.

Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE), the European Union (EU) funded programme was introduced by the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) team in district Jhal Magsi. Being a social worker, it attracted Aslam and he started playing his part in the formation of the Community Institutions (CIs) in his union council.



The Local Support Organisation (LSO) Mirpur was formed in 2020 and, Aslam was elected as the president. Realisation of the substandard lives and the development needs are the major transformations, as Aslam reflects. During the past three years, Aslam has realised how deprived the community is of basic facilities like health, education, and access to clean drinking water.

Along with his team, Aslam went to the elected representative of his UC and asked for his support to re-open the school which was closed for a couple of years. With their efforts and the financial support from the elected representative, they were able to reopen the school which now has some fifty students enrolled in it.

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Lack of realisation was the major challenge we faced during the formation of the Cls, and you cannot do much about it overnight.

"The residents could not even know or apply for their Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) which is a very basic document and due to this, they were unable to apply for and get jobs. Not only this, but without a valid CNIC, they cannot utilise any government social protection schemes", Aslam shared apathetically.

Aslam and his team have so far helped four hundred residents with CNIC applications and have registered two-hundred and fifty residents under the Ehsaas Cash Grant scheme by the Government of Pakistan.

Furthermore, the floods last year destroyed the district and put life to a complete halt for four months. Jhal Magsi was one of the most affected districts of Balochistan and it remained disconnected for many weeks from the rest of the province.

"Those were the hardest of days we have been through so far. People lost their shelters, their livestock, and some even lost their loved ones", Aslam shared with a heavy heart.

In the face of the disastrous situation, Aslam and his team remained busy taking care of the community as much as they could. Using the linkages developed in the past three years, Aslam contacted Imran Riaz Foundation and provided twenty families

with materials so they can reconstruct their houses.

Apart from this act of kindness, he and his team provided ration packages to sixty-five needy families in collaboration with Minhaj Ul Quran foundation and later three hundred ration bags were provided by the BRSP team, which were also distributed among the residents of different villages in the UC.

Aslam is still more active and busy on the ground than the rest of his team to create linkages and try to find new opportunities to better contribute to the community's development. He has built a very good image by doing social work in the town for the last few years and is much respected and equally trusted by the residents of his UC Gandhawa.

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I believe that I will have the same support in the future as well which will not only help me continue what I have been doing for the last few years but will also attract any future projects in the area.







INCOME GENERATING GRANTS (IGG)

KAZBANO VILLAGE LASKANI, UNION COUNCIL AKBAR ABAD

Laskani in the union council Akbar Abad of the Jhal Magsi district. She belongs to a poor family and the family hardly gets enough to meet daily needs.

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The society I belong to doesn't allow women to go out and work or study and that's the reason I couldn't either study or work.

Early-age marriages or child marriages are also one of the reasons for women's backwardness in this area. She also recalled that she does not exactly remember how old she was when her father said it was time for her marriage and things got even worse after her marriage. "I was so young that I had no idea about being married and the life after marriage", Kazbano reflected.

Today, she has eight kids, and she helps her husband to look after their needs. She shared that "Due to our cultural and traditional norms, women are restricted to homes. They are not allowed to attend public gathering, schools or even hospitals. That is why I couldn't go to school and study".

When the European Union-funded BRACE programme started its interventions in the union council Akbar Abad, Kazbano was among those residents who qualified for the Income Generating Grant (IGG).



As per the IGG principle, I received two goats as profitable assets and decided to start my own business with those two goats and extend it with the passage of time.







"I have four goats today and I hope the number will increase in the coming months or years", Kazbano expressed ecstatically.

She contributes to the family's daily expenses by selling the milk she gets from her goats.

Kazbano concluded with a thank you note for the European Union and the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) district team by stating "I am happy and thankful to these people and will always remain grateful as this IGG has enabled me to think and work independtly which would have not be possible otherwise".



COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND (CIF)

HANIFA VILLAGE ORGANISATION MASHALLAH

Despite challenges in district Jhal Magsi, Hanifa, a thirty-two year old woman has been able to take advantage of the few opportunities available in the town. Hanifa is a member of the women's Village Organisation Mashallah, in the Safrani union council of the district. She is a housewife, and her husband works as a farmer.

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To help my husband, I would go to the fields with him and work so we both can earn enough to spend on our daily households.

The European Union funded programme called BRACE is being implemented by the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in Jhal Magsi and one of its key interventions include Community Investment Fund (CIF). It is a community fund that is

loaned out to community members in a cyclic manner.

"Me and my husband decided to buy a goat the moment we received our interest-free CIF loan of PKR 20,000", recalled Hanifa. "The better option to us seemed livestock as we would not have to pay extra to feed the goat."

Hanifa now looks after her start-up as well as helps her husband out in her free time. Her business is steadily growing as the number of her goats is now three. By using her initial investment to purchase the goat, and now having three goats in total, she has been able to make profit by selling them in the market.

Hanifa told us that she has already sold one of her goats for PKR 9,000 and it has provided her with an additional income. It also helps her to sustain her business. She can earn more money in the future by growing the size of her herd.

66

I can use the milk from my goats to make cheese and other dairy products that can be sold for profit in the near future.

It is inspiring to hear stories like Hanifa's, where people in underprivileged areas can create opportunities for themselves and improve their standard of living through entrepreneurship and hard work.





TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING (TVET)

AYAZ AHMED VILLAGE ORGANISATION BALINA KHARI ITEHAD

A yaz Ahmed, 25 belongs to Union Council Khari of the Jhal Magsi district in Balochistan. He lives with his family of 10 and is a member of the Village Organisation (VO) Balina Khari Ittehad.

Ayaz is the only bread earner of his family. Like the rest of Balochistan, UC Khair of Jhal Magsi lacks basic facilities of health, education, and access to clean drinking water. Most of the villagers in Jhal Magsi are dependent on agriculture and livestock. However, in the past decade, heavy drought has badly affected agriculture and livestock which has forced many of the families to migrate to a better place where they can seek water for their agriculture, livestock as well as for drinking purposes.

While on the move, Ayaz has always struggled while looking for jobs in the town as there are fewer job opportunities in Balochistan.

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Unavailability of different sectorial jobs is a regular phenomenon in Balochistan, which makes the situation for people like me even worse.

"I had applied for jobs in a few organisations in the town hoping that I would be able to entertain my family in a better way once I secure a sustained way of income generation but I never got one", Ayaz shared.

Youth is considered one of the most vulnerable age brackets. Therefore, youngsters need special attention and skills to contribute positively to their respective community. After the introduction of the European Union-funded BRACE programme in district Jhal Magsi, Ayaz Ahmed was recommended for Technical and Vocational





Education and Training (TVET) by his Community Organisation (CO).

Ayaz was sent to the Institute of Rural Development where he would receive training in motorcycle repairing for the next couple of months. "A man with skill will never have to depend upon others for survival, no matter if he is not being hired, he will definitely find a way for himself", he expressed with joy.

Ayaz Ahmad completed his training in two months and returned to his hometown with the aim of setting up his own repair shop, but he soon realised that he didn't have the required capital to initiative a business.

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I thought the skill I have just got may not help me at all, but I couldn't afford giving up. I turned to my relative for financial help and started my own shop.

He further shared "I believed that having no earning source and no skill is like living a purposeless life and TVET enables one to work independently if there is no opportunity around."

Earlier before the TVET, he was completely dependent on others, if he got occassional work, he would feed his family otherwise his family suffered.

Ayaz has noticed improvement in his lifestyle as he stated "I earn around PKR 1,000 per day which helps me to manage the daily needs of my family."



I appreciate the work being done by the BRACE programme. I credit EUfunded BRACE programme and the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) teamfor it.



ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS (ALNS)

ZAHIDA UNION COUNCIL (UC) AKBAR ABAD

hal Magsi district faces severe challenges of access and quality when it comes to education. Despite the Balochistan government's "Balochistan Free and Compulsory Education Act – 2014", the district lacks basic educational facilities. The constitutional act makes the provincial government responsible for bearing all the education-related costs inclusive of stationery, school bags, school meals, and transport for the children in the relevant age group.

The act further stipulates that free and compulsory education is imparted to every child regardless of sex, nationality, race, or disability in a neighbourhood school. Due to a lack of concentration given, and fewer facilities and opportunities provided, many kids remain out of school and deprived of basic education

Zahida, a twenty-nine-year-old young girl is also one of those unfortunate children who never had the opportunity to get a formal education. She is a resident of UC Akbarabad, district Jhal Magsi.

Despite the challenges she faced, Zahida remained optimistic and determined to improve her life and those of others in her community if she gets an opportunity in the future to do so.



I want to study and want to educate hundreds of unprivileged girls like me. I want to do something special for such girls, so they have access to formal education.

When the EU-funded BRACE programme started its interventions in the district, Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills (ALNS) training centres were initiated in different parts of the district to give non-formal basic education to the girls of the area. Zahida was one of the students who attended the ALNS centre.

"I came to know about this institute via the women's Village Organisation (VO) Afshan. I immediately expressed my willingness to attend the institute", Zahida shared. "We were around twenty-five students in the centre and I consider myself lucky to be one of them.

As the days passed, she began to learn much from the classes. She learned to read and write and perform basic calculations. According to her, the classes also taught her essential life skills such as personal financial management, decision-making, and problem-solving.

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I was amazed at how much I could learn in such a short period and see the progress I was making throughout the training days. I believe that it was just the education that made me happy. She expressed that "Being part of the women's VO, gave me a sense of belonging and the members of the women's VO network were supportive, kind, and always ready to lend a helping hand that kept me encouraging".

Zahida's journey is a testament to the transformative power of education and community. She learnt not only to read and write but also how to be a more confident, independent, and empowered woman. She had the satisfaction of knowing that she was making a positive impact in the lives of others around her.









DISTRICT PROGRAMME MANAGER

MUNIR AHMED MENGAL DISTRICT JHAL MAGSI

"I belong to Wadh, a tehsil in the neighbouring Khuzdar district of Balochistan. In search of better opportunities, I went to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2006 and worked there while continuing my studies and completed my master's degree from the University of Bolton, UAE in 2014. Although I could stay there beyond those 10 years, I decided to return home. After coming back in 2016, I have had the privilege to serve the disadvantaged communities here", Munir Ahmed Mengal started sharing his journey.

Mengal after coming back to Pakistan joined the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in 2018 as a Coordinator for the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) programme and is currently working as the District Programme Manager (DPM) of district Jhal Magsi.

About the challenges in the field, Mengal shared that "Exertions do exist, the stakeholders or the influential in town want you to work as they desire which we cannot".

Like many parts of Balochistan, Jhal Magsi is also deprived of basic necessities and Mengal thinks deprivation of education is the basic reason why citizens don't realise their miserable conditions in Jhal Magsi. Social mobilisation under the European Unionfunded BRACE programme has played an



People's resistance has been dramatically reduced after watching the interventions on the ground. Now they do believe in the process and are willing to become part of the Community Institutions (CIs).

important role to sensitise people about their own betterment, about their fundamental rights and what their be priority needs can be.

People's resistance has been dramatically reduced after watching the interventions on the ground. Now they do believe in the process and are willing to become part of the Community Institutions (CIs).

Mengal added, as he explained the role of social mobilisation. He believes that social mobilisation has enabled people come closer, articulate their development needs and to work collectively for the benefit of the community.

"The formation of the CIs and the linkages the representatives of those CIs have developed with stakeholders of different organisations are assets. I believe they will continue the good work even after the completion of the programme", he shared confidently.

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I wish the other organisations as well as BRSP focussed more on the capacity building and livelihood of the residents as this, I think will play an important part in the development and empowerment of the community. Additionally, Mengal believes that the trainings imparted to the beneficiaries of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) will also have a positive impact on the livelihood of people.



MONITORING & EVALUATION OFFICER

KAMAL KHAN DISTRICT JHAL MAGSI

"I stepped into the development sector back in 2009 when I first joined the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) as a Literacy and Markaz (Centre) Coordinator for its project regarding education in district Jhal Magsi", Khan shared his journey. "In the beginning, I had no idea what I will be asked to do or what and how will I be doing it. But with time I got to know about the project and my role and responsibilities".

He is a young and passionate gentleman whose priority has always been serving his community. He was a university-going student when he received an offer from NCHD and he accepted it immediately despite sensing that it would not be easy to continue his studies and his job together at the same time.

According to Khan, due to a lack of

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The lack of awareness and education is the biggest challenge we have been facing throughout different projects in the district.

"

education and awareness, people in the town do not know how to take care of their health, especially pregnant women and newly born babies are mistreated and that is also one of the reasons of high mortality rates in Balochistan. "When any organisation or a medical team provides the pregnant ladies with some nutritive supplements or multivitamins, people do not feel easy and comfortable while using such drugs", Khan expressed.



Additionally, Khan also played his part in the 2018 general elections campaign where he trained the election staff in district Jhal Magsi before joining the European Union (EU) funded BRACE programme as a district Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer in 2019.

"The first thing we struggled with was the formation of Community and Village Organisations as for this task, the community members were not being paid and literally no one was willing to work for free", Khan stated.

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Later, it became a bit difficult for the district team to implement the project as everyone wanted either Income Generating Grant (IGG) or Community Investment Fund (CIF) which was not possible at all as the district teams had to follow some standard protocols.

Despite the barriers and obstacles, Kamal Khan and his team have achieved a lot during their tenure with the EU-funded BRACE programme. He shared that the

Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI) is something that has reduced the number of waterborne diseases in the area as before, few lucky residents in some parts of the district had access to clean drinking water.

"IGG has improved people's lives and their income has reportedly increased as compared to the prior grants", stated Khan.

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Not only such interventions but also the awareness sessions being delivered by the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) have changed the perspective of the life of the community members.







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Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme

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