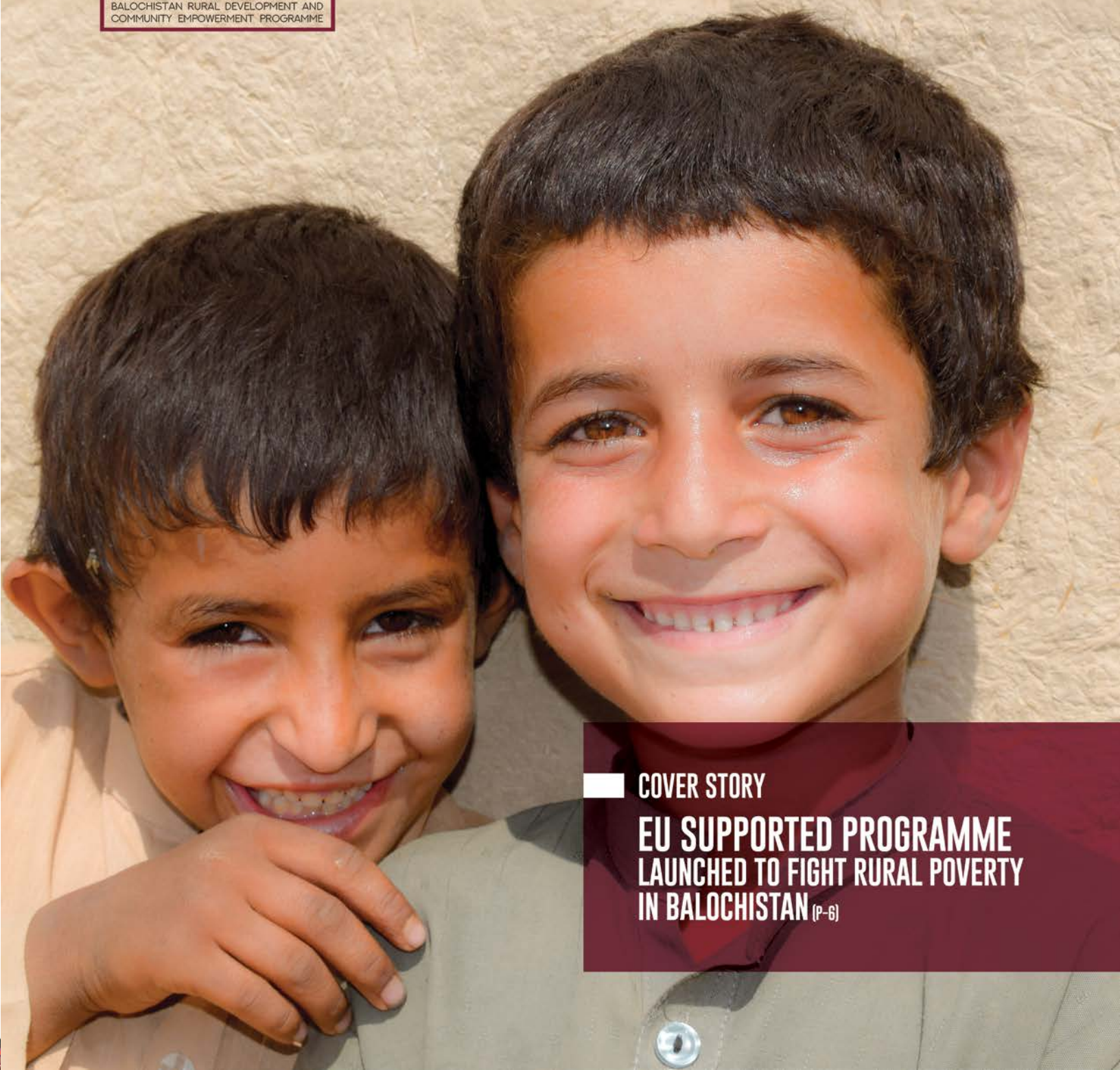




BRACE PROGRAMME ONE YEAR ON



COVER STORY

**EU SUPPORTED PROGRAMME
LAUNCHED TO FIGHT RURAL POVERTY
IN BALUCHISTAN (P-6)**



BRACE Programme is funded by the **European Union**

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Message from the EU Ambassador H.E. Mr. Jean-François Cautain



Dear Readers,

The European Union is working with the Government of Pakistan to enhance the social and economic status of the most deprived and underserved communities. In collaboration with both the Federal and Provincial governments, the EU is fostering linkages between the authorities and communities in order to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in different parts of the country.

EU-supported rural support programmes are designed to support gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women, education, vocational training, income generation support, improved public infrastructure and the delivery of essential services at community level. This is how our flagship Balochistan Rural Development And Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme aims to improve the lives of rural communities in nine districts of Balochistan. By working with our RSP partners, we seek to promote community-driven development, empower the local population and help them realise their full potential. The BRACE Programme also supports the Government of Balochistan's efforts to create a sustainable development policy framework. We aim to enhance the capacities of the local authorities to work more effectively with their constituencies. I am particularly happy that BRACE will benefit all communities in the targeted districts - without any type of discrimination. I am confident that the work done by BRACE will ensure a legacy of sustainable community development in rural parts of Balochistan that will benefit all members of these communities, including women.

Message from the CEO RSPN Ms Shandana Humayun Khan



Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan, where more than 70% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty. In order to support the Government of Balochistan to sustainably address rural poverty, through promoting a stronger partnership between government and people, the European Union is providing financial support to the Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme in nine districts of Balochistan.

The RSPs have over three decades of experience in working with rural communities across Pakistan. A key feature of the RSP approach, also replicated in the BRACE Programme, is the belief that poor women and men have an innate potential to improve their own lives. However, they face certain constraints, for which the RSPs offer support. The communities are offered a 'development partnership', which they first must agree upon. Following this, the communities then need to be organised into their institutions, to harness the power of collective action. Once organised into community institutions at three levels i.e. the neighbourhood level, the village level, and at the Union Council level, these community institutions choose their own leaders and begin a savings programme. Over time, their institutional capacity is fostered and strengthened, they begin to undertake development initiatives supported by the BRACE Programme as well as by local, public-sector authorities, to whom they are linked up for certain services.

The European Union works with two RSPs (i.e. BRSP and NRSP) that implement BRACE Programme. It works with RSPN, which provides a quality assurance and strategic harmonisation support to the RSPs. RSPN's role includes working with the Technical Assistance team, led by Human Dynamics, the RSPs and the Government of Balochistan, to arrive at policies that will formally include community institutions in Balochistan's development processes and plans. It also includes a strong research and communications component. The European Union is the largest supporter of the Rural Support Programmes and their community driven development approach. RSPN and the RSPs are most grateful to the European Union for entrusting this challenging task to us, and to the Government of Balochistan for its support and encouragement in the implementation of the BRACE Programme. Our aim is to put in a joint effort to improve the lives of the people of Balochistan.

The BRACE Programme at a Glance

Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme European Union (EU) funded rural development programme is being implemented in close collaboration with the Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RD) Department, Government of Balochistan (GoB).

The BRACE Programme, will empower citizens and communities to implement community-driven socioeconomic development interventions, and enhance their abilities to influence public policy with a view to achieving more inclusive and equitable service delivery.

At the same the Programme will help the local government develop mechanisms that facilitate citizen participation in their development and governance processes. This will be achieved by establishing the relevant policy and institutional framework to facilitate participative socio-economic development, building the capacities of local authorities, and supporting public finance management reform.

Support to local government will be provided by Human Dynamics (Austria), and Oxford Policy Management (UK) which will assist the Government of Balochistan to cost and fund the community-led development policy framework through clearly defined fiscal and regulatory frameworks, budgetary processes and commitments reflected in a multi-annual budgetary framework and defined institutional arrangements.

Supported by the European Union (EU) Delegation to Pakistan, this five-year Programme – using the Rural Support Programmes’ (RSPs) social mobilisation approach to Community Driven Development (CDD) – will supporting the Government of Balochistan in its efforts to reduce the negative impact of economic deprivation, poverty and social inequality.

It will achieve this by empowering communities to actively participate in identifying and implementing socio-economic development activities on sustainable basis in partnership with local authorities.

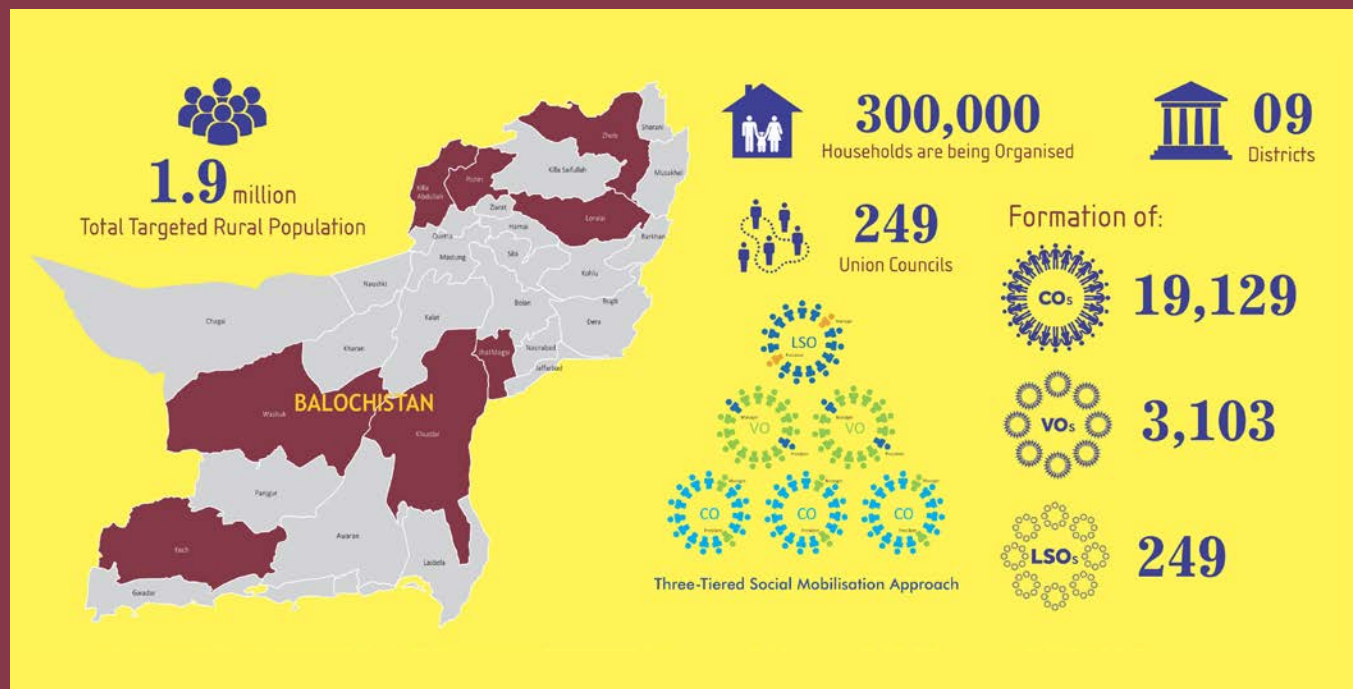
Impact of the BRACE Programme

The BRACE Programme, a € 45 million investment by EU to bring about changes in the socioeconomic conditions at the grassroots level in Balochistan, will benefit 300,000 poor rural households in 249 union councils.

It will mobilise and organise these households into a network of community institutions.

Under the BRACE Programme, 19,129 Community Organisations (COs), 3,103 Village Organisations (VOs), 249 Local Support Organisations (LSOs) and 31 LSO Networks at tehsil level and nine at district level will be fostered.

RSPs will then provide support to improve the lives of organised households and their livelihoods, as well as to foster linkages between the community institutions and local government for the better and improved delivery of basic services to the communities.



EU Supported Programme Launched to Fight Rural Poverty in Balochistan



Quetta, November 10, 2017: The Local Government and Rural Development Department (LG&RDD) of the Government of Balochistan (GoB) together with the BRSP, NRSP and RSPN organised the launch ceremony of the € 45 million Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme on November 10, 2017 in Quetta.

The chief guest was Dr. Hamid Khan Achakzai, the Provincial Minister for Planning and Development (P&D). Others who addressed the ceremony included the Federal Minister for Postal Service, Maulana Ameer Zaman, the former Chief Minister of Balochistan Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, EU Ambassador His Excellency (H.E.) Mr. Jean-François Cautain, the Minister for LG&RDD Sardar Mustafa Tareen, Senator Nawabzada Saifullah Magsi, the Adviser to the Chief Minister on Forests, Wildlife and Livestock, Mr. Obaidullah Babat, Member of the Provincial Assembly, Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali, Senator Sanaulah Baloch, the former Federal Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education and Women Development Ms. Zubaida Jalal, and Provincial Secretary of the P&D Mr. Asfandyar.

RSPN Chairman Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, RSPN CEO Ms. Shandana Khan, BRSP CEO Mr. Nadir Gul Barech, NRSP CEO Dr. Rashid Bajwa, and Human Dynamics Deputy Team Leader Mr. William Pitkin presented different aspects of the BRACE Programme.

Dr. Hamid Achakzai noted that his department had worked very closely with the EU and partners to design the BRACE Programme, and that its framework and interventions would transform the lives of rural communities in the province. "The provincial government is committed to facilitate and support the implementation of all pro-poor programmes," he added. H.E. Mr Jean-François Cautain in turn noted that the ownership of the Programme by the Government of Balochistan and politicians of the province was particularly encouraging.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan remarked that currently EU is the only major donor in Pakistan who has faith in involving communities in their own development.



EU Delegation

Visits BCDP and BRACE Programme in District Jhal Magsi



Jhal Magsi, April 14-15, 2018: The Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Jean-François Cautain led a delegation to Jhal Magsi on the 14th and 15th of April 2018 to observe the impact of the EU-funded Balochistan Community Development Programme (BCDP 2013-16) on the lives of poverty-stricken communities in targeted areas.

The BCDP was a predecessor to the more ambitious BRACE Programme. The team met with community members, local leaders, women and children. H.E Jean-François Cautain spoke of the importance of taking on board the requests and suggestions coming from the organised communities when making local development plans.

He also emphasized the need to include women in economic activities and encouraged the female members to come forward and be a part of development process.

He appreciated the work and efforts of BRSP and other implementing partners in helping people come out of intergenerational poverty in district Jhal Magsi.

Experience Sharing & Learning

Visit to Tajikistan



RSPN arranged an international experience sharing and learning visit for the BRACE Programme partners and stakeholders to Tajikistan in October 2017. A group of 19 delegates included former Chief Minister of Balochistan Dr. Abdul Malik, Dr. Hamid Khan Achakzai, Minister of Planning & Development Balochistan, Sardar Ghulam Mustafa Khan Tareen, Minister of Local Government Balochistan, officials from the Government of Balochistan, Additional Chief Secretary, Secretaries from P&D and LG&RD departments, GoB, representatives from BRSP, NRSP and RSPN were part of the delegation.

The delegation visited different programme areas of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) - Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP) in rural Tajikistan. Mr. Yodgor Faizov, Chief Executive Officer of AKF Tajikistan, told the Pakistani delegation that after Tajikistan gained independence in 1991, the country's economy collapsed and people face many severe problems including famine-like situation. At the request of the Government of Tajikistan, AKF began emergency relief and humanitarian aid operations in the poorest province of the country.

The AKF launched the Agricultural Reform Programme (ARP) to support the land privatisation process and to increase agricultural productivity. They also initiated the Village Organisation Development Programme, adapted from experiences of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) of Pakistan. The programme was later expanded to other provinces of the country. Today, AKF/MSDSP is the largest CDD organisation in Tajikistan.

The delegation met with both with local authorities and communities was most appreciative of the work of the Tajik community institutions, particularly their close relationship with the local authorities. VOs had undertaken savings mobilisation and supported many self-identified initiatives, e.g. school construction. Women members were particularly active and vocal. Their confidence came as a result of their self-empowerment through undertaking economic and income generating activities. Seeing positive impact of the multi-sectoral work of community institutions, the delegation members felt confident that similar results would be achieved in Balochistan.

BRACE PROGRAMME

Team Trainings



Orientation Workshop for the BRACE Programme RSPN Staff
 Islamabad, September 21, 2017: RSPN organised a day-long orientation workshop for newly hired staff members of the BRACE Programme in Islamabad.



BRSP's Female Staff Visits SRSP in Swat & Haripur Districts
 Islamabad, November 19 - 20, 2017: A group of BRSP women staff members travelled to Swat and Haripur districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to see and observe the role of local women in the community led development work of the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP). The women staff group was very impressed by results achieved by the active role of local women in community institutions.



Balochistan Synergies Workshop Held in Quetta
 Quetta, April 18 -19, 2018: The EU Delegation to Pakistan, with assistance from the BRACE Technical Assistance Team, RSPN and BRSP organised a two-days consultative Balochistan Synergies Workshop on 18-19 April 2018 in Quetta, Balochistan. This workshop was seen as a first step towards improving coordination and cooperation by identifying possible synergies and lessons learnt from the completed/ongoing EU funded programmes. Presentations by each organisation and the opportunity for discussion allowed participants to quickly identify similarities in mandates, activities, issues and challenges.



ToT on Gender and HR Policies and Anti-Sexual Harassment Laws in Pakistan

Quetta, December 11-14, 2017: RSPN organised a Training of Trainers (TOT) for the staff of RSPs and government officials on RSPs Gender and HR Policies and Anti-Sexual Harassment laws and their implementation at organizational levels in Pakistan. The master trainers will next roll out the same training at district levels.



Training Workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation Framework & Socioeconomic Baseline Approaches and Methodologies

Quetta, November 27 - December 01, 2017: To support effective implementation, RSPN organised a five-day training workshop on monitoring & evaluation framework and socioeconomic baseline approaches and methodologies.



Coordination Meeting Between BRACE Programme Partners

Islamabad, September 21, 2017: A coordination meeting of the BRACE Programme Partners including representatives of Local Government and Rural Development Department (LG&RDD), Government of Balochistan was held in Quetta to share Programme progress and plans and identify possible synergies.

BRACE-RSPN Team Visits

District Kech, Pishin, Zhob, Killa Abdullah, Loralai & Kech



Since the Programme's inception the RSPN's team has conducted seven field visits to observe the progress of the BRACE Programme and also activities funded under the BCDP, including livelihood initiatives, water supply schemes, flood protection wall and agricultural support to local communities.



Training of Trainers on Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) Held in Quetta

Quetta, February 19-23, 2018: RSPN organised a five-day training of trainers (TOT) on use of Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) Manual for the RSPs and government officials in Quetta. The CAT includes basic information about nutrition, health and hygiene, family planning, HIV/AIDS, MNCH, gender, civic rights, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate change and environment, natural resource management, and other selected thematic/cross-cutting areas.



Training on Quality Assurance and Quality Control Plans and Tools for the BRACE Programme

Quetta, April 11-12, 2018: To ensure quality of the Programme interventions, RSPN has developed a quality assurance and control plan (QACP) with comprehensive checklists developed for each activity/intervention. A two-day training was organised to orient the project District Managers and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Officers, Heads of M&E Sections along with the government officials.



RSPN Organised PIM Training for the BRACE Programme partners and GOB Officials

Quetta, January 26-30, 2018: A five-day Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop on the Programme Implementation Manual (PIM) was held for the key staff of the BRACE Programme Partners in Quetta. Relevant government officials from provincial departments also attended the PIM training.



BRACE Programme to Support Persons with Special Needs (PWSNs) at District Pishin

Pishin, June 12, 2018: The BRACE Programme, in collaboration with Chal Foundation, organised a free medical camp to provide orthotic and prosthetic support to local communities in three union councils of District Pishin. This is the initial phase of rehabilitation support that will be provided to 100% of Person with Special Needs.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

June 2017 - June 2018

Household Covered by Poverty Scorecard Census  **312,476**



Households Organised
16,391
NRSP + BRSP



Members trained in Orientation training workshops
140



Members trained on CAT
53



COs Formed
977



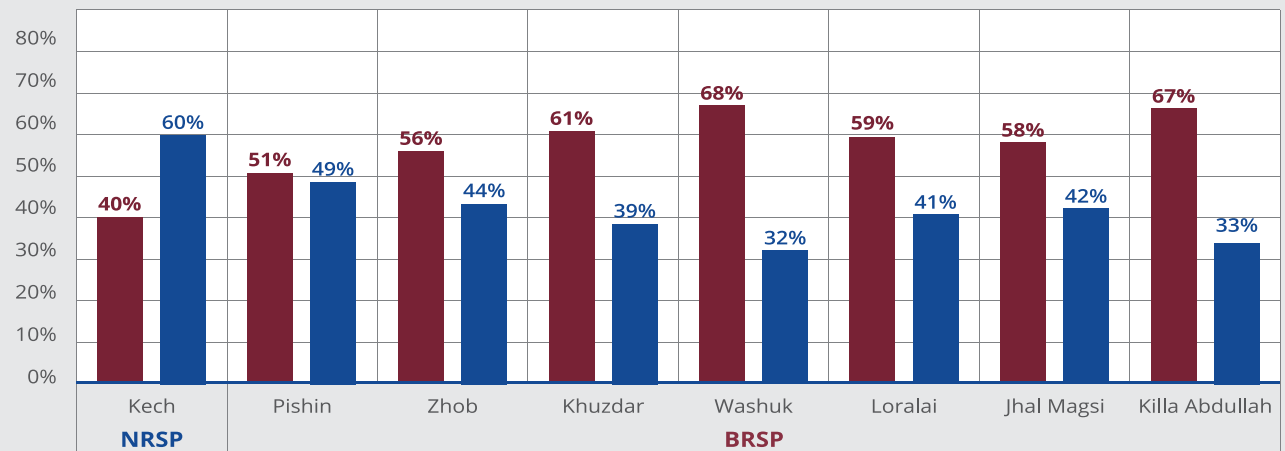
VOs Formed
121



Women COs
213

FIGURE POVERTY SCORECARD ANALYSIS

● % of HHs (0-23) ● % of HHs (24-100)



Poverty Scorecard Analysis

District Wise

As part of the social mobilisation process, the RSPs have conducted a door-to-door survey in 249 rural Union Councils of the nine districts of the BRACE Programme. The Poverty Scorecard (PSC) is a tool that is used to rank the poverty levels of each household. A total of 312,476 households (1,723,627 individuals) have been surveyed. The result reveal that 57% of the households score between 0-23 %, making them officially poor. Washuk is the poorest BRACE Programme district where roughly 68% of the households are poor.

Partners Highlights



Community Awareness Toolkit Training

Kech, March 20-23, 2018: NRSP conducted a training for its field staff on Community Awareness Toolkit, using a learning by doing approach.



NRSP Conducted PIM Training Workshop

Kech, March 09-13, 2018: NRSP conducted Programme Orientation Training Workshop for its staff and government officials on Programme Implementation Manual. After this, NRSP staff will train community leaders.



Poverty Scorecard Training

BRSP and NRSP organised training sessions on how to carry out the Poverty Scorecard (PSC) census during the first quarter of the BRACE Programme.



Orientation Training Workshops for BRSP Team

Since inception of the Programme, BRSP has conducted three Orientation Training Workshops for a total of 94 members of the BRACE Programme team from 8 districts.

GoB Establishes Strategic Development Partners Forum (SDPF) for Streamlining Donors Interventions and Coordination

In order to streamline the donors' intervention and coordination, the Government of Balochistan has decided in principle to establish a Strategic Development Partners Forum (SDPF). This forum (SDPF) will provide a platform for the development partners to streamline and align their respective assistance as per needs of the Government of Balochistan.

Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme is supported by the European Union (EU) and implemented in close collaboration with the Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RD) Department of the Government of Balochistan (GoB). The Grant component of this five year (2017-2022) Programme is implemented by Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in nine districts of Balochistan, namely Jhal Magsi, Kech, Khuzdar, Killa Abdullah, Loralai, Pi shin, Duki, Washuk and Zhob. The Programme is technically supported by Human Dynamics (HD), an Austrian company that will support GoB in fostering an enabling environment for strengthening the capacities of local authorities to manage and involve communities in the statutory local public sector planning, financing and implementation processes.

The overall objective of BRACE Programme is to support the Government of Balochistan in reducing the negative impact of economic deprivation, poverty and social inequality, environmental degradation and climate change, and to turn this into opportunities to build and empower resilient communities participating actively in identifying and implementing socio-economic development activities on a sustainable basis in partnership with local authorities. Under the BRACE Programme, 1.9 million Pakistani citizens of 300,000 poor rural households in 249 union councils (UCs) will be mobilised and organised into a network of people's own institutions i.e. 19,129 Community Organisations; 3,103 Village Organisations; 249 Local Support Organisations (LSOs) and 31 LSO Networks at tehsil level and nine LSO Networks at district level. Once organised, the communities will have greater access to local authorities and line departments as a collective unit, giving them a stronger voice, to have their demands heard. The Community Institutions will then prepare their own development plans in consultation with local authorities and these communities will be made financially viable through provision of community investment fund to 23,550 poor households to start/boost up their businesses for income generation. Approximately 14,000 community members, especially women, will be provided technical and vocational education training and literacy and numeracy skills to increase economic opportunities and employability. The communities will be facilitated to build and manage 363 community level physical infrastructure schemes and more than 10,000 poorest member households will be provided with income generating grants and micro health insurance to safeguard them against health and economic shocks.

By the end of the Programme, it is expected that at least 25% of the poor household will see an improvement in their incomes; at least 40% of the households will graduate from the lowest to upper poverty score card band levels; at least 50% of the households of the targeted areas will report improved access to basic social services and at least 50% of members of community institutions and beneficiaries of socio-economic interventions are women. Moreover, by 2018 a policy framework for community-led development will be developed and adapted by GoB and public finance management reform process will be initiated in the province.



"This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union."

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