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Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme

NEWSLETTER

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The Government of Balochistan Delegation's Exposure and Learning Visit to the Community Institutions of Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in Chitral

Under the European Union-funded BRACE Programme, a delegation of senior government officials from Balochistan and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) from district Kech participated in an Exposure and Learning Visit to the Community Institutions fostered by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The visit was facilitated by Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN).

During the visit from 11th- 16th October 2021, the delegation visited the rural community institutions formed by AKRSP. The purpose was to learn from AKRSP's experiences and observe success models which they could replicate in rural Balochistan. The also visited the micro-hydel power plant in Buni, constructed and managed by the rural communities' institutions.

The Government of Balochistan delegation also met with the district administration Chitral, Government



of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Ms Nusrat Jabeen, District Officer, Social Welfare Department, Mr Zahir Shah, DC office, Mr Mirajuddin, District Accountant and Mr Niaz A Niazi, President District Bar Chitral. The two groups discussed the Community-Driven Local Development (CDLD) model and ways to incorporate the three-tier community institution model

into the governance system.

The GoB delegation and RSPN thanked the District Administration Chitral for their hospitality and support in making their exposure visit a success.

Most prominent and widely read Urdu and English newspapers and print media agencies of Chitral extensively covered the Delegation's Exposure and Learning Visit.



Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) meeting with Government of Balochistan Delegation from Pishin District

The Government of Balochistan Delegation and BRACE Programme staff from Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) from Pishin district visited Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Gilgit Baltistan. The prime objective of this visit was to meet community institutions fostered by AKRSP at the village and union council level and see how they undertake joint planning with union council authorities (state & citizen linkages). On their return to Islamabad from Gilgit, the delegation met RSPN where they were briefed about overall community-driven development (CDD) approach and BRACE Programme.

The delegation was led by Mr Akbar Tareen, District Programme Manager BRSP. The delegates included Mr Fazal Rehman, Director Agriculture Research, Agriculture department GoB, Mr Saeed Mohammad, Divisional Forest Officer, Forest Department GoB, Mr Faisal Faheem Khan, Assistant Commissioner, Home Department GoB, Mr. Sheikh Najeeb Ullah, Additional Deputy Commissioner Home Department, Mr Mumtaz Rind District Support Manager PPHI, Mr Akal Khan, Junior Engineer, Irrigation Department GoB, Mr Abdul Karim Agha, UC Secretary, Local Government, Mr Syed Faizullah Shah, Deputy Director, Agriculture Department GoB, Mr Abdul Samad, Social Welfare Officer, Mr Niamat Ullah, DDP, Mr Abdul Wasey Kakar, District Education Officer, Mr Nadeem Faraz Panezai, Mr Fazal Raziq, Population Officer, Dr Muhammad Tariq, Senior Veterinary Officer, Mr Qamber Ali, District Finance Officer BRSP and Mr Nasir Kamal, District Admin officer BRSP.

Mr Khaleel Ahmed Tetlay, Chief Operating Officer at RSPN briefed the delegation that CDD approach through social mobilisation was initiated by the AKRSP under the leadership of Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan during the 1980s in Gilgit Baltistan region of Pakistan. After the success of this approach and replication in other parts of Pakistan, the approach was later adopted,



adapted and replicated by other neighbouring and regional countries like India, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The same CDD approaches have been adopted in the nine districts of Balochistan under EU funded BRACE Programme. Therefore, it is important for the BRACE Programme stakeholders (representatives of Government of Balochistan and RSPN/RSPs) to learn from the experiences of CDD programmes in Gilgit Baltistan.

Following the presentation by the COO RSPN, Mr Sajjad Hussain, Programme Manager gave a detailed presentation of the BRACE Programme; its objectives, expected outcomes, impact and progress on Programme interventions such as Community Investment Fund (CIF), Income Generating Grants (IGGs), Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET), support to Persons with Special Needs, and progress on local development plans. He also enlightened the delegates about the emerging outcomes of the BRACE Programme interventions by sharing the findings of a research conducted by IPOR on “Community Livelihood Enhancement through CIF, IGGs and TVET for Poor Households under the EU-funded BRACE Programme.” The study found that IGG beneficiaries reported an average income (net of cost) of PKR 3,100 per month, which is the equivalent of 23% of their average monthly household income, according to the survey. Qualitative evidence suggests that IGG-related income helped improve

food consumption for all household members (including children), access to health care, and children’s education. CIF beneficiaries reported an average income (net of cost) of PKR 1,600 per month, which is the equivalent of 11% of their average monthly household income according to the survey. TVET beneficiaries reported an average income (net of cost) of PKR 3,300 per month, which is the equivalent of 16% of the average monthly household income of TVET beneficiaries according to the survey.

The delegates shared their experience and observations of how community institutions formed in the AKRSP region are engaged in development in GB. One of the delegates shared, “It is easier for the government departments to work with the communities when they are already organised.” He further elaborated, “when Locust swarms first arrived in Pishin, we consulted the BRSP’s district manager, who introduced us to the Local Support Organisations (LSOs). We donated pesticides and gave technical expertise to help the communities tackle the problem through the LSOs. It was easier for us to reach deserving villagers through the platform.” Towards the end of the meeting, Ms. Shandana Khan, Chief Executive Officer at RSPN, emphasized that the government line departments work with the community institutions formed under BRACE Programme.

Income Generating Grants: A Source of Income with Dignity

Ms Robeena from union council Solband in district Kech lives with her 68-year-old father, Tajamal, and mother in a single-room mud house. Her four brothers live separately.

She said that her father used to work at a welding station in a market in Kech. The screw fixing and welding machine broke down four years ago and her father became unemployed. The family did not have any disposable income to fix the machine. To meet the daily expenses, he sold the tools at the welding shop. Soon they had neither tools to work with, nor a functional machine. Life became a burden. "It was stressful and hurtful to see my father so helpless. It was difficult for us to ask our relatives for support", she said.

Ms Robeena became a member of

a community organisation with the hope that her fellow villagers might support her family in times of need. Soon after, she was nominated for an Income Generating Grant under the European Union-funded BRACE Programme as her poverty score was

17. She said, "I received a grant of PKR 33,400 through the community organisation. With that amount, my father fixed the screw fixing/welding machine and also purchased basic tools for his shop. My father resumed his welding work and his business started to thrive."

Tajamal said with pride on his face, "It is good to earn a livelihood with dignity. Robeena supported me to regain my dignity. I wake up at 6:00 am and come to my welding shop. My shop remains open till evening.

My customers include bus, truck, car and motorcycle owners who come to me to get their broken or cracked vehicle parts joined. Also, I clean and fix screws and bolts. I earn PKR 35,000 to 40,000 per month. We are no longer dependent on our relatives".



SUCCESS STORY FROM KHUZDAR

The Beauty of Balochi Embroidery

Pakistan is a country with diverse cultures and each area has its own signature style of embroidery. The province of Balochistan, which evokes an image of barren lands and rugged mountains also holds an exclusive richness in its culture that is intriguing yet unknown to many who live in other parts of Pakistan. Among other gifts from this province, Balochistan really stands out for its embroidery. The fine-looking embroidery that women at home create is prized not just in Pakistan but also abroad. These traditional patterns are created by the Baloch women with a variety of colours and require a lot of hard work, concentration and time.

When you go to Balochi embroidery women, they show you a variety of patterns, made up as samples on a big cloth. The customer chooses a pattern and provides the women with threads and cloth. The women

then create personalised designs for each customer, according to the color scheme and the chosen fabric. These designs can take days to be prepared but they are worth the time. The Baloch women are not usually



allowed to leave their homes to earn a living, so they create amazing pieces of art from home. The patterns are featured on shawls, waist coats, caps, dresses, wall panels, floors and sofa cushions. Tiny round mirrors are used in the embroidery and distinguish them from other types of embroidery.

44-year-old Zainab from Village Saifabad in District Khuzdar received a Zigzag machine as part of an Income Generating Grant under the European Union funded BRACE Programme in July 2019. She has since earned over PKR 60,000 and expanded her business by buying “Thappay” for block printing.

Earning an average of PKR 5000 per month, Zainab is now earnestly saving her profits. She has also lent money to two neighbors. This helped one travel for work and the other used the money to take his sick child to the hospital.

What is fantastic about this embroidery is that it is never old and



extremely adaptable. It can be merged with new fashions and seems highly trendy, when a mix of traditional embroidery is created with new styles. The embroidered wall panels are fascinating and give homes an artistic flare. Floor and sofa cushions also attract a lot of attention because they are so beautifully made and a lot of color contrasts are used that cannot be ignored by the human eye. We

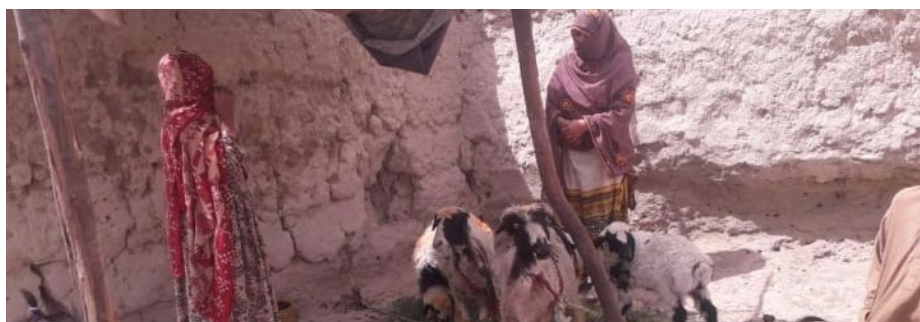
certainly need to cherish this artistic talent which is a part of our culture and identity, so it does not die away.

The present fast-paced lives are making it harder for people to indulge in creating such crafts but it is possible to keep this tradition alive, by providing it the support and appreciation it deserves.

SUCCESS STORY FROM LORALAI

BRACE Programme Believing in the Potential of Rural People

Women from our rural communities have the utmost resilience to fight hardships and they never falter during challenging times. Jamala, a mother of seven from Loralai is the epitome of resilience. She was married to a daily wager at a very young age, but fate had different plans for her. Her husband died and the responsibility to earn for her children fell on her shoulders. As a single mother she faced difficulties in raising her children, but she never gave up on her dream to provide the best for her children. Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) believes that the potential of people like Jamala can be harnessed for rural development. Through the European Union funded BRACE Programme it provides Income Generating Grants (IGGs) to poor



community members, especially women. Providing IGGs to Community Institutions (CIs) is an integral part of the Rural Support Programmes’ (RSPs) social mobilisation approach. Once formed and recognised by the RSPs and government authorities, the CIs are given an IGG as a community grant. These CIs will then serve as a platform for planning and implementation of household-level interventions to improve the lives

of the rural community. The IGG will be managed and implemented by the community institutions themselves. Jamala was given an animal husbandry income generating grant. She uses this as her source of income and with it earns enough to live a decent life. She is grateful to the European Union funded-BRACE Programme and BRSP for believing in her potential.

Sana's Entrepreneurial Spirit

35-year-old Sana has a Poverty Score of 12 and is a mother of four children, the eldest one being 17 years old and the youngest one seven years old. She is expecting a fifth child. Her husband is disabled since birth and has limited mobility. She is a member of Community Organisation Gabon Centre Female, which was created in 2018.

Sana found out she was eligible for an Income Generating Grant under the EU-funded BRACE Programme and decided to use the funds to re-stock her shop which was functional since 2007. She received PKR 33,400 in 2019 and invested it all in buying stock for her shop. While she previously depended on her brothers and her husband's family to support them financially, she now earns up to PKR 15,000 every month.



Two months ago, she invested in a refrigerator, which costs PKR 70,000. For this she used her savings from her salary from working as a Community Resource Person, as well as the family's earnings from the shop. This allowed her to make a PKR 40,000 upfront payment for the refrigerator. She is paying the remaining PKR 30,000 in monthly installments of PKR 5,000, using the profits from the shop. With an improved financial situation at home, she has started investing in her children's education. She is also

taking care of her health and has been able to go to the hospital for regular antenatal checkups, twice already.

Sana has also expanded her micro enterprise. She purchased casters to make kulfi (milk-based ice cream) and has been making this at home for two days now. She makes 60-70 kulfis every night with her two children and sells them for PKR 5 each. "If you come again in the evening, they will all be sold out", she says proudly as we look at the few remaining kulfis in her fridge.

Additional Chief Secretary (Development) Visits District Pishin

On 13th August 2021, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Mr Hafiz Abdul Basit was given a tour of the newly established Community Physical Infrastructure Scheme initiated by the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) with financial assistance from the European Union- funded BRACE Programme at union council Khushab in district Pishin. CEO BRSP, Mr Nadir Gul Barech, spoke about the importance of creating social capital through social mobilisation to eradicate poverty at the household level. President of Local Support Organization (LSO) Khushab presented the self-help initiatives taken by the community organisation to develop their community.

The ACS was impressed when a BRSP



fostered LSO formed in 2015 spoke about their self-help initiatives and how the LSO has been able to mobilise resources from the Government, as well as other international donors by being organised into Community Institutions. The ACS became convinced that the BRSP's approach should be

replicated across Balochistan and could be budgeted in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). The ACS reiterated that the only way the Government of Balochistan can improve service delivery is by organising the rural poor into Community Institutions to harness their potential.



Delegation of Balochistan MPAs Visit NRSP LSO Sui Cheemian, Rawalpindi

A delegation consisting of Parliamentary Secretary for Women Development, Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Ms. Mahjabeen Sheeran, women members of Balochistan Provincial Assembly, officers of Women Development Department, Government of Balochistan, academicians from Sardar Bahadur Khan Womens' University, representatives of BRSP, Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara (GBTI) and Rural Support

Programmes Network (RSPN) visited the Local Support Organisation Sui Cheemian in tehsil Gujar Khan of district Rawalpindi.

They appreciated the development activities undertaken by the Community institutions fostered by NRSP in the area. They were also kind enough to take part in a tree plantation in the village and visited the Vocational Training Centre managed by the local community.



BRACE Gender Mainstreaming Strategy Workshop & Action Planning

A two-day workshop on the BRACE Gender Mainstreaming Strategy & Action Planning for nine districts of Balochistan took place in Quetta on the 26th and 27th of August 2021.

BRACE Programme teams from Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) participated in the event. The workshop was conducted by Mr Babar Bashir, Managing Director Rozan.

Day one focused on understanding the socialisation processes and gender roles, exploring the connection between gender and self-awareness, gender and



power, gender tree and the impacts of gender inequalities in the society. The second day of the workshop focused on locating masculinities in gender discourse, understanding of

vulnerabilities and specific needs of different groups in community for an inclusive approach and BRACE Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and finalisation of RSPs Action Plans.

Refresher Trainings on Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) in Quetta and Gwadar

Under the European Union-funded BRACE Programme, Mr Bashir Anjum, Manager Special Projects Wing from RSPN gave a three-day training on the Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) to the social mobilisers and capacity building officers of Balochistan Rural Support Programme in Quetta from 30th August till 1st September 2021 and to the field team of National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) in Kech-Gwadar from 10th till 12th September 2021.

The informative and educational sessions included awareness on maternal health, immunisation and



vaccination, mother and child health, family planning, infant nutrition, HIV and Hepatitis, WASH, child education,

disaster management, basic human rights, marriage rights, environmental degradation and climate change.



Stakeholders' Meeting

Regular stakeholder meetings, negotiation, and consensus-building are the pillars of an effective social mobilisation strategy. Balochistan Rural Support Programme's social mobilisation team conducted a stakeholders meeting under the European Union-funded BRACE Programme at Assistant Commissioner Office in district Pishin.

Assistant Commissioner, Mr Saeed Ahmed Dummer chaired the meeting, where Medical Superintendent (MS) of Tehsil Headquarter Hospital (THQ) Dr Habib ur Rehman, DDOE Mr Habib Alam, Agriculture Officer Mr Akram Khan, and members of Community Institutions (CIs) also took part in the meeting.



Distribution of Community Investment Fund

Under the European Union - funded BRACE Programme, a cheque distribution ceremony for Community Investment Fund (CIF) was conducted in Union Council Shaighaloo of district Zhob on 9th September 2021. Pass books and transaction IDs were provided to twenty deserving families, and these were also trained on collecting the amount from MCB bank. During the ceremony, all LSO members, Community Resource Persons (CRP), Community Bookkeepers (CBK), borrowers and other villagers participated in large numbers. Beneficiaries were briefed in detail about the methodology of the CIF and rechecked all the hard



records. In case of fluctuation, they instructed CBKs and CRPs were instructed to complete the records as soon as possible. The participants

thanked BRSP and all the beneficiaries promised that they would make sure their recovery is on time.

Formation of LSO District Network

Local Support Organisation (LSO) District network was formed by Balochistan Rural Support Programme team of district Washuk under the BRACE Programme on 23rd September 2021. Nine LSOs are working in this

structure. LSO network provides opportunities for better coordination with the tehsil, district, and other Government of Balochistan line departments. Women participation is ensured in LSO networks so that





members of the community can work in cohesion between themselves along with other civil society organisations. Representative from government departments, Islamic Relief Pakistan, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and BEF were present during the ceremony.

Community Physical Infrastructure Inauguration

BRSP under the EU-funded BRACE Programme helps construct and improve Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI) including WASH, education, and health facilities, link roads, street pavements, irrigation channels, disaster protection measures, alternate/renewable energy provision, or any other infrastructure needs identified and prioritised by the organised communities through a structured participative and inclusive development planning process. These



infrastructures will be managed, built and maintained over time by the communities, who will also form Operations and Management (O&M) committees and ensure community contribution. Water scarcity is a growing concern in Balochistan and rural communities face difficulty with clean water. BRSP under the BRACE Programme constructed a drinking water supply scheme in district Washuk, which was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Washuk, Muhammad Javed Domki.

The European Union - Funded

BRACE Programme

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