





Implemented in Collaboration with the Local Government and Rural Development Department, Government of Balochistan

Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme

NEWS LETTER

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNER

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EU Ambassador, Her Excellency Dr Riina Kionka visits Balochistan

Ambassador of the European Union to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Her Excellency Dr Riina Kionka visited Balochistan in November 2022. She had meetings with the senior officials of the Government of Balochistan, including the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly and the acting Governor, Mr Jan Muhammad Jamali. In addition to her engagements in Quetta, Her Excellency made a special road trip to the community organised by BRSP under the BRACE Programme in UC Tootak, district Khuzdar. Dr Kionka particularly loved the way the little girls from the local community welcomed her in her native Estonian language. She talked to community members, leaders of the LSO Tootak and attended a session dedicated to women of the Union Council. The Deputy Commissioner of district Khuzdar, Mr Ilyas Kibzai hosted the delegation of the EU officials. Transformative progress of the EU-Funded BRACE Programme was discussed, and Her Excellency promised continued support from the European Union

Riina Kionka 🤣 @RKionka · Nov 25, 2022

🛢 EUPakistan 🌚 @EUPakistan - Nov 25, 2022

Kudos to the local community organisations in Khuzdar where men and women both play an impactful role in promoting gender equality, providing confidence and voice to the vulnerable and socially excluded. Social mobilisation is key part of EU assistance programmes @BRACE_BRSP



Delegation in Pakistan to the people of Balochistan. RSPN's Programme Manager for BRACE Programme, joined the Chairman, Anwar Saleem Kasi and CEO Dr Tahir Rasheed and other senior colleagues from the host, Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in briefing the delegation on the important work done under this flagship EU Programme in Balochistan.

Stakeholder Engagement Dinner in Honour of the EU Delegation in Quetta (22 November 2022)

BRSP, one of the implementing partners of the EU-Funded BRACE Programme hosted a dinner in honour of European Union Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Her Excellency Dr Riina Kionka. She was accompanied by her spouse and other EU delegates. The dinner was attended by parliamentarians and ex-members/ministers, director generals, vice chancellors of leading universities, provincial heads from UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA and UN Women, heads of various civil society organisations and other dignitaries from the provincial capital.



Keynote Address by Her Excellency Ms Riina Kionka

- The Ambassador shared her views on climate change and congratulated Pakistan for achieving a landmark in COP27 in the shape of Loss and Damage Fund. She further said that Balochistan remains a key area in their development plan for the next seven years.
- She said that EU has worked for Balochistan on rule of law, health as well as in other sectors and that the EU has just begun implementing a programme in Balochistan on water sector.
- Rural development is a difficult and complex task and BRSP has expertise in it. The Rural Support



Programme Network can render good services in terms of both

participatory development and the sustainable development.

Dr Tahir Rasheed, CEO Balochistan Rural Support Programme

- Highlighted the BRSP and EU's partnership starting from pre-2009 period till date.
- Summarised key areas of the BRACE programmes for the diverse audience in attendance.
- Thanked the EU Delegation on behalf of BRSP Board of directors and all staff.



Tea hosted by Deputy Commissioner Kalat (25 November 2022)

The EU delegation had a brief stopover in Kalat to meet with the Deputy Commissioner Mr Munir Durrani. Mr Durrani told Her Excellency about the damages done by the recent floods and also requested her to expand the BRACE Programme and include districts like Kalat. He also presented the history of the former royal state of Kalat under the British empire. Mr Durrani explained how the state of Kalat in Balochistan acceded to the Dominion of Pakistan on 27 March 1948, after having declared independence earlier on 15 August



1947. It was accepted by the Governor General Muhammad Ali

Jinnah on 31 March, making Kalat state an integral part of Pakistan.

Visit to District Khuzdar (25 November 2022)

The delegation of European Union travelled to Khuzdar on Friday, 25th November 2022 for a visit. Following activities were undertaken by the delegation in district Khuzdar:

- Meeting with leaders from LSO Tootak
- Meeting with beneficiaries from various programme interventions of the BRACE Programme
- Meeting with leaders from the Women VO Network and interaction with BRACE beneficiaries



Visit to Village Organisation Sardaree Sher

Visit to Drinking Water Supply

Scheme at Village Sardaree Sher meeting with Village Organisation's 0&M Committee.

Meeting with beneficiaries of BRACE Programme Interventions

- Her Excellency Ms Riina Kionka interacted with the artisans in their stalls and was informed about different aspects and interventions of BRACE Programme that had led to creation of high-quality artisan products.
- BRACE TVET courses brought the specialised skills of value addition at village level in far flung areas of the rural Balochistan. This enabled village woman to undertake value addition on existing stone wash, wool and even on materials other than cloth, where they undertook intricate embroidery work resulting in high quality, market competitive products sent to the local markets. All the products are handmade, while product diversification has also been followed up producing designed





suits and handmade wallets and women's shoes with delicate embroidery work.

- The delegation was informed that the ALNS (Adult Literacy and Numerical Skills) course is spread over 6 months, enabling the adult learners to achieve literacy level of a 3rd grader. Women of the village expressed explicit desire to initiate advanced ALNS courses so that they can learn more.
- The rural women could not come to the city to acquire the TVET training. BRACE successfully solicited the services of TVET training institutes to provide at doorstep.
- Most of the women in attendance, including the President, specially shared that the Tehsil Network has also enabled them to bring their previously ignored issues in limelight and seek solutions, which was earlier not possible due to cultural restrictions.



- The women have been mobilised to attend their meetings at respective Village Organisation where they discuss the common issues and through dialogue come up with possible solutions. These proceedings are then documented through specific VO resolutions, which are also submitted to respective Local Support Organisation.
- Dr Shahnawaz Khan explained in detail to Dr Riina Kionka the three-tier organisational structure, starting with Community Organisation at neighbourhood level, further strengthened Village Organisation through and finally consolidated in a representing body called Local Support Organisation at Union Council Level. Currently, all the UC level organisations have also



networked together at Tehsil and District levels.

- The same meetings are also utilised to raise issues specific to women. These cases are then supported by other members of the Village Organisations through meeting with the male counterparts.
- All these efforts are steadily strengthening their collective

voices, which will ultimately add to the existing power structure.

She also thanked the colleagues accompanying the delegation. She shared that this visit will enable the European Union's Delegation in Pakistan to be able to better support the poor regions by witnessing the impact of their cooperation.

Visit to Community Physical Infrastructure Scheme

Dr Riina Kionka also visited a drinking water supply scheme in Tootak. The scheme is benefiting 250 individuals. BRACE has facilitated the community to construct, manage, operate, and maintain this scheme themselves. A fair share of resources is invested by the communities themselves under all BRACE infrastructure schemes. For this scheme, the community has pooled in money for routine operation and maintenance. BRSP has constructed 46 community physical infrastructure schemes in district Khuzdar.

Dinner hosted by Deputy Commissioner in Khuzdar

A dinner was hosted by Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar, Mr Ilyas Kibzai, at the circuit house in the honour of the EU Ambassador. A large number of people from all walks of life were also invited to the dinner by the DC. Speaking at the occasion Mr Ilyas Kibzai welcomed the guests. He thanked the dignitaries for visiting Khuzdar and meeting the local communities and the beneficiaries of the BRACE.





BRACE Programme Lessons Learnt Workshop at Gwadar

The BRACE Programme started in July 2017 and its current No-Cost-Extension will conclude in June 2023. As the Programme comes to an end, RSPN organised field visits to district Kech and a Reflection Workshop in Gwadar in November 2022. The objective of this workshop was to understand and document the challenges faced during the implementation period, how these challenges were addressed, which strategies proved to be effective on the field and what interventions failed to deliver the expected



outcomes. This exercise was pivotal to document the lessons learned from the implementation of this largest community empowerment Programme in Balochistan. This exercise also aids in improving project planning and design for the future. The cohort of the workshop participants included Technical Assistance team, implementing partners i.e. BRSP, NRSP, RSPN and DAI staff members and select representative of Community Institutions fostered under this Programme.

Inspiring Case Studies from the Field

Case Study 1 - Camel Library: Bringing Hope and Books to the Rural Children of Balochistan

The hard-hitting COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyone's definition of normalcy. Our prior belief that work and schooling must take place in-person has been challenged by the transition to remote learning and Zoom. But in Balochistan. the country's most impoverished province, villages lack stable internet connection, and in-person learning was not possible for more than a year. This left education out of reach for children in the region, which already had the highest percentage of out-of-school children in the country. This is when an unusual phenomenon came to the rescue: the camel library!

Three days each week,

underprivileged children in Balochistan have rare access to books through this unusual source.

The camel library is part of the innovative mobile library services; a one-of-its kind education initiative utilising local transportation mediums and channels, including camels, boats, motorcycles, and rickshaws to provide story books to the rural children. The titles are in Urdu and English and cover topics ranging from general knowledge to Islamic studies.

As Pakistan recovers from Coronavirus, the camel library continues to engage children and help them with their studies and



maintain their attachment to books.

Under the European Union-Funded Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) and Alif Laila Book Bus Society. This





partnership aims to rehabilitate the book reading culture in the rural youth of districts Washuk, Khuzdar and Jhal Magsi by providing 8000 high quality books published in Urdu and regional languages. So far, Local Support Organisation Sachan from dristrict Khuzdar has distributed

Urdu and Balochi story books to over 200 students! The camel library is proving to be a beacon of hope for the rural girls and boys of Balochistan.

Case Study 2

Financial Services & Assistive Devices under BRACE Programme put the Life of Ms Mahdeem back on track!

The poverty targeted approach being followed under the BRACE Programme and the combination of the financial and social protection services is a good mix of interventions to serve almost all pressing needs of the underserved communities of District Kech. The Social Mobilisation and social guidance are catalysts on the top, for lasting impacts of the Programme. This combination has been a blessing for Mahdeem Bibi, 45, widower, disabled from both legs and mother of 5 children.

Life had been a little unkind with her, as she was enduring hardships feeding her children in the absence of a regular source of income. Hailing from Village Bug Ward Sari Kahn (MC Turbat), Mahdeem's both legs became dysfunctional in her early childhood due to Poliovirus. She is married to Charshambay who was a daily wager and never earnt enough. He could neither feed his children and wife nor he could provide them a shelter. They had five children, one after the other.

Her husband passed away years back and left her disabled wife and five children helpless. Mahdeem shattered and disabled. was however, she knew she would have to feed her children on her own. She started Balochi embroidery works at home and because she was unable to go to market due to her disability, she was constrained to sell her products to a middleman who exploited her and made maximum profit out of her hard work. Mahdeem knew it, however,

she did not have any other option but to live with this exploitation. While she was struggling in her life, she joined her CO Bug Zamuran Bazar under the BRACE Programme.

Since her poverty score was 21 and she was found eligible for the financial support under BRACE Programme, her CO members suggested her to think about taking CIF loan and start some other activity for income generation. She decided to benefit from this life-time opportunity and availed a community loan of PKR 30,000. She purchased some young goats and her elder son, 16, helped her in grazing the goats. In few months, her son sold some goats in local market and purchased few older goats. She also continued savings from selling goat milk and was able to repay the loan timely.

While her goats' herd was growing, she heard in her CO that some assistive devices were being provided under BRACE programme to Persons with Special Needs (PWSNs). She got herself registered and after initial screening and





examination, she got an Orthosis Lower Limb - Below Knee device. This helped her stand on her feet and gradually she learnt to briskly walk with this device. Now she can even look after her goat herd besides moving around for day-today needs.

Mahdeem's is a success story as she benefitted from the crosssection of two interventions ie CIF combined with assistive devices. Financial independence and ease in physical movements has lifted her barriers to live a normal and decent life. She is optimistic to educate her small children with the little savings and convert her thatched home to a proper two-room house one day.



Case Study 3

Assistive Devices Provided under BRACE Programme are Transforming the Lives of PWSNs

The idea of the Provision of Assistive Devices to the Persons with Special Needs was conceived much later during the implementation of the BRACE Programme. However, the time has proved that it was a decision with far-reaching and life-transforming impacts. The assistive devices have turned PWSNs into active members of their families and the society and contributing to the income of their families. They needed a little push in their lives in the shape of assistive devices, guidance and technical assistance that they got from the **BRACE** Programme.

Mr Adeel Ahmed. 20 and resident of village Umethan Bazar Ward, Union Council Solband in Kech District benefitted from the BRACE Programme. Both of his legs are stunted due to Poliovirus in his early childhood. He is one of the six siblings of an extremely poor family who neither had a permanent source of income nor any other social protection. His mother died many years ago, and his father is a daily wager who occasionally earns about PKR 500 a day which hardly suffice for one-time food. His elder sister Ms Abida started Balochi hand-embroidery to support his father.

Adeel was eager to share the burden of his family. He tried to work as a cobbler from his home, however, it could not run well due to his physical inability. Meanwhile, her elder sister, who is also an active member of the local CO Saleh Muhammad Mullah, got an Income Generating Grant of PKR 34,400 from BRACE Programme. She decided to set up a small-scale mobile repair workshop for his disabled brother. Since mobile repairing didn't require frequent physical movements, so this suited him. While he began learning mobile repairing, his physical disability became a hurdle as taking him to mobile shop in the village



Bazar was a challenge. His father and some other relatives supported him by carrying him to the shop for few days, soon they realised they couldn't continue it sustainably. It was this moment when her elder sister learnt about the distribution of the assistive devices for PWSNs under the BRACE Programme.

Through her CO, she submitted a request for her brother Adeel which was approved after necessary medical verification. Weeks later, Adeel got a





brand-new wheelchair and this was the turning point in his life. He quickly learnt to drive the wheelchair on his own and started to go to the mobile shop. He is now independent in his life and managing his own two-way travel to shop and back to home. He learned zealously to repair mobiles and earned good name in the market. He is now earning about PKR 10,000 a month and proudly sharing the burden of his father and elder sister in feeding his brothers and sisters. He is grateful to the support of the BRACE Programme.







BRACE Technical Assistant (TA) – DAI

The GoB Community-Led Local Governance Policy (CLLG) Policy Submission for Approval

"The Government of Balochistan is about to take a historic step towards devolved Local Governance and Empowered Community Participation through approval of the Community-Led Local Governance Policy!"

The Local Government & Rural Development Department has submitted the Government of Balochistan's Community-Led Local Governance (CLLG) Policy to the Chief Secretary's Office. This policy was endorsed by the Strategy and Policy Dialogue Committee (SPDC) on 7th September 2022.

Prior to the submission to Chief Secretary Office, and for further procedural compliance, this policy and the policy framework were duly submitted to the Finance Department for their opinion and further perusal.

Now the Chief Minister's Secretariat is to submit the Policy to the provincial cabinet for approval. The approval and full operationalisation of this Policy will allow Community Institutions to receive and benefit from public sector funds, as well as become a partner in the local governance and local development efforts, which are intended to provide improved services to rural and urban disadvantaged communities.





Group Study Tour: The Hague Academy for Local Governance (HAfLG)

Under the EU-BRACE Technical Assistance component of BRACE Programme, a delegation of senior officials from the Government **Balochistan** of completed a week-long training and study tour at the Hague Academy for Local Governance (HAfLG) in Netherlands. the International experts facilitated interactive and encouraged learning from case studies, from comparable developing nations across the globe, who had excelled in various aspects of community development and local governance. In the Dutch capital, the Embassy of Pakistan hosted a meeting and participants also visited Rotterdam and Amsterdam where they met community-based



organisations and local councillors of the Dutch municipalities. In addition to the GoB officials, the delegation of 20 participants also had representation from the BRACE partners DAI, RSPN, BRSP and NRSP.

CLLG Policy Investments Prioritisation Model (PIPM)

То ensure transparency and uniformity in CLLG Policy project selection, as well as to avoid elite capture in the selection, an automated algorithm -driven Policy Investment Prioritisation Model (PIPM) is being developed by TA. The model in MS Excel comprises a district selection tool and has six automated modules. The tool guides and facilitates ranking of priority districts based on prior defined and agreed district profile/ need-indicators, and the modules guide and facilitate then prioritise

selection and ranking of (1) **Community Physical Infrastructure** (CPI), (2) Technical and Vocational Trainings (TVET), (3) Income Generation Grants (IGG), (4) Community Investment Fund (CIF), (5) Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills (ALNS) interventions and (6) an open option to-be-identified for Community Mobilisation projects support like emergency/relief, health insurance. low-income housing, Persons With Special Needs (PWSN) support etc.

Various deliberations were held on the criteria and indicators of the model. The consultant was able to complete both components of the PIPM model, and further pilots will be conducted with key champions in the government at provincial and district levels. The finalised model will be tested and a last round of feedback from stakeholders will be collected, to be followed by a presentation to the Secretary LGRRD, planned in January 2023 for feedback and approval.



Launching of Local Government & Rural Development Sector Plan Assignment

The Government of Balochistan marked an important milestone on 2nd December 2022 by launching the GoB Local Government and Rural Development Sector Plan assignment, led by the Local Government and Rural Development Department (LGRDD). The LGRD Sector Plan is one of the cornerstones of a solid GoB CLLG Policy. It is delivered as an output-based contract, and another key deliverable of the TA. This assignment is funded by the European Union and under the guidance of the Local Government & Rural Development Department, it is scheduled for completion by May 2023. The Rehman Habib Consultants (RHC) have been contracted by the DAI Pakistan under the Technical Assistance Project.

Background of GoB Local Government and Rural Development Sector Plan Development

The Technical Assistance team's Government Counterpart is the Local Government and Rural Development Department (LGRDD) and it is working on five Result Areas with the GoB LGRDD. Under its Result Area-1 "A dedicated Strategic and Policy for Community-Led Local Governance formulated and adapted", Technical Assistance has been facilitating Government of Balochistan to design and adapt its innovative Government of **Balochistan** Community-Led Local-Governance (CLLG) Policy. The Implementation of this policy will be organised through range of policy а implementation arrangements. One of the arrangements is an adopted GoB Local Government and Rural Development Sector Plan, that clarifies the LG&RD sector domain, the sector needs, a sector development strategy, and its expected sector development outcomes, to enable the GoB CLLG Policy to realise the expected sector outcomes. The launching ceremony of this LGRDD Sector Plan was organised on 2nd December 2022 at the Office of Secretary Local Government & Rural Development. The launching ceremony was attended by the members of the LGRDD Sector Plan Advisory Committee and Monitoring Committee members the chairmanship under of Mr Dostain Khan Jamaldini -Secretary LGRDD, representatives from the Local Government and Rural development Department, Planning & Development





Department, EU-BRACE Technical Assistance and the Rehman Habib Consultants (RHC).

LG sector plan assignment kick-off

ceremony and combined meetings of the Advisory and the Monitoring Committees held at the Secretary LGRDD office on 2nd December 2022.

Gender Mainstreaming (GMS) Action Planning

Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan assignment commenced in October 2022. Gender Expert in the TA team initiated coordination with the BRACE stakeholder Government departments and BRACE implementing partners to identify and prioritise tangible practical key actions. The expert consulted the relevant staff and gender experts from RSPN and NRSP, and the EU Gender Expert, Ms Meriem, First Secretary EUD, briefed the stakeholders on the BRACE Programme and BRACE

GMS strategy, and GoB GMS Actions Plans.

The GoB counterpart departments, facilitated the gender expert, designated focal persons to identify and implement their GMS actions. The GMS expert held a series of meetings with these assigned focal persons, with the aim to identify, prioritise and finalise key GoB GMS actions. Seven GMS Actions have been identified and prioritised, including three for Women Development Department, two each for Social Welfare Department and Local Government and Rural Development Department. Prioritisation of GMS Actions for Finance Department and Planning and Development Department is in process and will be finalised by February 2023. After the finalisation of the GoB GMS Actions with counterpart departments, quidance, and approval from by the EUD will be sought, followed by implementation that is overseen by the Women Development Department.

GoB GMS Actions Prioritized by the Counterpart Departments During Oct-Dec 2022



Assisting Balochistan Rural Development Academy (BRDA) to become an autonomous institution - BRDA Rules of Business (ROB) Assignment

An important assignment to develop the BRDA Rules of Business (ROB) for Balochistan Rural Development Academy (BRDA) is concluded. This assignmentaimedtosupporttheBRDA become an autonomous institution, as part of the recommendations of the BRDA's Capacity Building Plan (CBP) formulated by the TA. The development of the assignment was initiated in September 2022 and completed in December 2022, which was undertaken by a short-term consultant.

The assignment started with stakeholders' mapping and documents desk review and was followed by a week-long consultative field visits to Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to meet relevant institutes and gain knowledge about their statutes and good practices as input to design the RoB. Meetings were held in KP with the Academy of Rural Development and Local Governance School, while in Islamabad the National Commission of Rural Development and Institute of Rural Management were visited. Their source documents and management structures were reviewed. Consultative meetings with experts on legal and institutional



framework were also held. It started with stakeholders' mapping and documents desk review and was followed by a week-long consultative field visits to Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to meet relevant institutes and gain knowledge about their statutes and good practices as input to design the Rules of Business.

As part of the assignment, the RoB Consultant held consultative meetings with key stakeholders and concluded these sessions with a meeting with the Secretary LGRDD. This included DG, Deputy Director Trainings and 05 lecturers of BRDA. Meetings in Balochistan were conducted with former Secretary Finance and former DG BRDA and a meeting with Director Planning LGRDD/BRACE Focal Person. The TA consultant prepared a detailed presentation and set of background documents for the Secretary LGRDD that included the earlier prepared BRDA Need Assessment Report and BRDA Capacity Building Plan. Based on the feedback of the Secretary, the consultant completed the final draft of the RoB assignment. The BRACE TA team reviewed the Final Report and submitted it to the Secretary LGRDD and BRACE Focal Person for review and approval. The LGRRD intends to develop BRDA as an authority through an act of Parliament so that the BRDA can become an autonomous institution.



Key Performance Indicators (KPIs as of December 2022)

Key Performance Indicators(KPIs)	Total Targets (2017- 2022)	Achievement as of December 2022 (2017-2022)	Achievement(%)
Number of Households with (Poverty Score card) survey completed (Targeted Districts)	413,809	417,185	100.8%
Number of Households Organised	294,713	287,869	97.7%
Number of COs formed	19,129	26,013	136.0%
Number of Female COs (50%)	No Target	11,399	43.8%
Number of VOs formed	3,085	5,660	183.5%
Number of Female VOs (50%)	No Target	2,112	37.3%
Number of LSOs formed	243	237	97.5%
Number of Female LSOs	No Target	3	1.3%
No. of Participants Trained on CAT (70% of organised CO members)	280,699	649,463	231.4%
Female Participants Trained	No Target	457,337	70.4%
No. of community members trained in CMST (2/CO)	40,258	37,167	92.3%
Female Members Trained	19,129	16,362	44.0%
Number of Community Members Trained in LMST	5,600	5,524	98.6%
Female Members Trained	3,296	2,156	39.0%
No. of MIPs formed (target equal to number of CO members organised)	294,729	389,913	132.3%
No. of VDPs formed	2,467	3,506	142.1%
No. of UCDPs formed	243	237	97.5%
Number of community members trained for TVET (Resource Requirement)	3,183	3,432	107.8%
Women Trained for TVET	1,085	2,174	63.3%
Number of target poor households members received the IGG/asset transfer for productivity and income enhancements, disaggregated by sex	13,632	12,670	92.9%
Number of HH benefiting from CIF for productive asset building and income generation	19,550	11,159	57.1%
Number of community members (specially women) trained in ALNS (Adult literacy & Numeracy Skills)	12,064	12,104	100.3%

The European Union Funded

BRACE Programme

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