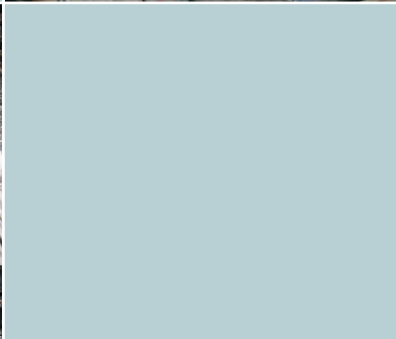




SARHAD RURAL SUPPORT
PROGRAMME



MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES



SRSP's FATA Local Area Development Programme (FLADP)

About this Study

This study has been prepared with the financial support of Canadian International Development Agency in collaboration with Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP)

The views, findings, interpretation and analysis expressed in this study may not reflect views of Canadian International Development Agency.

Title photographs

A cross-section of visuals from SRSP's FLAD programme, depicting most significant change stories

Our Partners



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MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES

FATA UNIT
SARHAD RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME
PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN

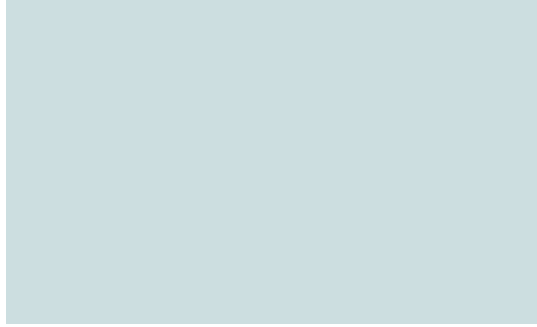
ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCDB	Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMST	Community Management Skills Training
CO	Community Organisations
CI	Community Institution
CPI	Community Physical Infrastructure
CRP	Community Resource Person
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FLADP	FATA Livelihood Area Development Programme
FR	Frontier Regions
IMC	International Medical Corps
IUCN	International World Conservation Union
LSO	Local Support Organisation
LMST	Leadership Management Skills Training
MCO	Men Community Organisation
MSC	Most Significant Change
MER	Monitoring Evaluation and Research
OTG	One Time Grant
PKR	Pakistan Rupee
RSPN	Rural Support Programmes Network
SDP	Sustainable Development Plan
SMEDA	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority
SRSP	Sarhad Rural Support Programme
UKaid	United Kingdom's Agency for International Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDP	Village Development Plan
WCO	Women Community Organisation
WCIG	Women Common Interest Group

CONTENTS

SECTION 1	
Introduction	06
Background to FATA Integrated Area Development Programme	07
Achievements of the Programme	09
Most Significant Change Stories	10
SECTION 2	
Community Institutions and Networks	12
People and their Institutions	13
Customised Approach to Community Organisation in FATA	14
Most Significant Change Stories	16
SECTION 3	
Improving and Strengthening Livelihoods	22
Opening Doors to Economic Prosperity	23
Most Significant Change Stories	24
SECTION 4	
Improving Delivery of and Access to Social Sector Services	26
Increasing Access to Education	27
Most Significant Change Stories	28

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION



Background to FATA Integrated Area Development Programme



Institutional arrangements for governance have been inadequate and investment in development has failed to target those who need it the most.

Starting with the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the last three decades have seen turmoil and instability across the border spill over into the tribal areas. During this period, FATA has remained one of the most insular and isolated corners of the country, cut off from the mainstream Pakistani society. Its people have seen few of the benefits of the development activities launched in their area, and have failed to share in the progress achieved elsewhere in the country.

Increasingly impoverished and marginalised, they have also become vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of criminal and extremist elements.

Poor and skewed development priorities are partly to blame, coupled with the absence of social and political awareness. At the same time, institutional arrangements for governance have been inadequate and investment in development has failed to target those who need it the most. These and other factors



Landscape of Kurram Agency

have allowed a select group to influence the benefits from government spending in the area, with no measurable impact in terms of social uplift, asset management, value addition or economic development at the grassroots level.

The government realises that this state of affairs is no longer viable. Integration into the mainstream Pakistani society is the only feasible option. There is an urgent need to strategise the planning process and target development investment.



A girl in FLADP area collecting water



The FATA Sustainable Development Plan (SDP) was therefore developed by the Government of Pakistan in partnership with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and a host of other development actors, most notably the USAID, UKaid (DFID), IMC and GoP's SMEDA. The FATA SDP aims to promote a just, peaceful and equitable society where people can live in harmony and with dignity by securing social, economic and ecological well-being. It takes an integrated approach to combine economic and social development with environmental integrity and poverty alleviation¹.

In order to roll-out the FATA SDP, the Rural Support Programmes were seen as an important part of the strategy for the involvement of the civil society in the development process in FATA. This is because the plan recognises the significance and importance of local wisdom, participatory orientation and a people-centered approach for any development strategy to work in the region. And, the RSPs have emerged as lead organisations in bottom-up community-driven development.

This led to an agreement between the Civil Secretariat FATA and the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) to

“The plan recognises the significance [...] of local wisdom, participatory orientation and a people-centered approach for any development strategy to work...”

extend the latter's north-west frontier-based operations to selected areas of FATA. These include Kurram Agency and Frontier Region (FR) Peshawar. The objective of the endowment is to provide the institutional stability and capacity for the Rural Support Programme to deliver on a long-term basis in the area. It is, therefore, an organisational approach, enabling SRSP to take the programme to scale by leveraging additional resources for increased development efforts in the area.

With the seed money provided in July 2007, SRSP extended its programme to Kurram and FR Peshawar. However, SRSP and CIDA collaborated to take the programme to scale through investment of additional resources for feeding into the larger whole-of-government's FATA SDP.

The FATA Integrated Area Development Programme or FATA Local Area Development Programme aims to alleviate poverty in select communities through improved livelihoods, basic development services, income-generating opportunities

and improved local governance to contribute to the Canadian 'whole-of-government' approach to broader stability and security.

The programme is based on the RSPs' well-tested and tried framework of poverty alleviation.

It is a responsive, flexible and adaptive initiative that caters to the needs of the people in the region. There are five components of the programme:

1. *Community Institution and Networks*
2. *Improving and Restoring Livelihoods*
3. *Improving/Rehabilitating Rural Infrastructure*
4. *Improving Delivery of and Access to Social Sector Services*
5. *Policy Advocacy and Linkages for Pro-Poor Development*

While the core of the programme is poverty alleviation through the creation of an enabling environment to unleash the potential of the people, it also promotes conflict resolution within communities, building goodwill and strengthening relations between tribes and organisations in the Pakistani-Afghan border areas as well as communities at provincial/national level through pro-poor policy advocacy.

1. Reference: FATA Sustainable Development Plan 2006-2015

ACHIEVEMENTS of the Programme

The FATA Local Area Development Programme aims to alleviate poverty in select communities [...] to contribute to the Canadian 'whole-of-government' approach to broader stability and security.

1. 233 community institutions, representing 3,507 households, have been organised so far in Kurram Agency and FR Peshawar. Of these, about a hundred are women community institutions.
2. The community-based organisations have been federated into community networks that are membership-based and deliver their role for linkage development and resource mobilisation.
3. The members of community-based institutions have received various trainings, e.g., managerial and leadership skills training, conflict resolution and disaster management training.
4. So far, 75 community-managed physical infrastructure schemes have been established in FR Peshawar and Kurram Agency. These benefit 1,702 households or about 15,000 individuals.
5. Through its livelihood improvement initiatives, the programme has so far enabled 2,100 men and women to acquire employable and entrepreneurial skills. Thus, the programme has created opportunities for economic growth for the poor and marginalised.
6. 14 community-based schools have been established, which have enabled 1,400 boys and girls to attend schools in areas where there are no public and private schools.



Most SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES

The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved, both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the programme as a whole. Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories

for dissemination and informing future actions.

This technique was invented by Rick Davies in an attempt to meet some of the challenges in monitoring and evaluating a complex participatory rural development programme in Bangladesh, which had diversity in both implementation and outcomes. The programme was run by the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), a Bangladeshi non-government organization. The large scale and open-ended nature of the activities posed a major problem for the design of any system intended to monitor process and outcome.²

² Reference: The Most Significant Change Story Technique by Rick Davies and Jess Dart, April 2005.



The programme has remained flexible in identifying entry points and placed equal emphasis on both practical and strategic needs of the communities.

Why MSC Technique?

SRSP selected this technique to capture best practices of the FATA Integrated Area Development Programme for a number of reasons. *Firstly*, the programme is diverse in its nature since it takes a holistic approach to the social well-being and economic development of the most underprivileged and marginalised in the society. *Secondly*, and perhaps more importantly, SRSP has remained flexible and adaptive to the local context in defining the programme parameters. This, in itself, makes the programme diverse in terms of its processes and outcomes. Our approach in implementing this programme has emphasised on understanding FATA prior to offering support to communities. This has encouraged slow but an organic process led by the communities. The programme has, therefore remained flexible in identifying entry points and placed equal emphasis on both practical and strategic needs of the communities.

Thus, the relationship between the programme and the local context has been, at times, directly proportional and, sometimes, inversely proportional. But, each time, it has contributed significantly to understanding what works and how it works in FATA, encouraging SRSP to expand its initiatives to mountains otherwise considered impossible to traverse.

In 2007, SRSP was given the mandate to expand its programme to only Kurram Agency and FR Peshawar by the Government of Pakistan. Six years later, in 2013, SRSP is delivering both humanitarian and development projects in Mohmand Agency, Bajaur Agency, South Waziristan Agency, Orakzai Agency and FR Tank.

If we sketch a timeline of the events that occurred during these six years or if we plot our journey on a graph, it would show that it was not a linear process. It would, in fact present a cross-sectional,

multi-dimensional illustration of how the Project evolved (and continues to do so) - emanating stories of human resilience and hope, sound leadership and management and an interesting narration of how an organisation learns, unlearns and relearns strategies and coping mechanisms. There were moments when the journey would become even and we would pace up, and then there were times when it would become uneven and our graph would fall steeply downward. The former encouraged us to expand the Project to other parts of FATA, while the latter made us stop and rethink our approach and strategies.

The MSC technique, therefore, has helped us in bringing out significant stories of change. These are human stories that reflect the impact of small initiatives on lives that may have otherwise remained untouched. These offer a glimpse into the lives of men and women who have played and continue to play an important role in impacting their own lives and the lives of those around them. These are stories of people larger than life itself.

Objectives

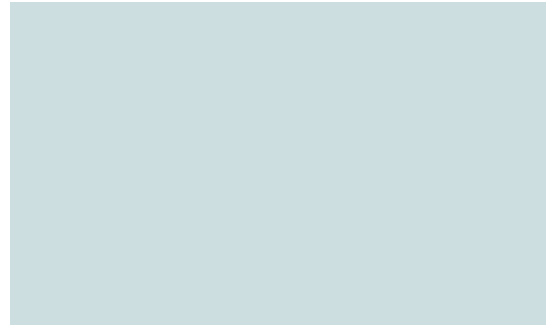
- » To identify unexpected change
- » To understand what people consider to be most significant change in their lives as a result of this programme

Methodology

The field teams were given a checklist of questions to follow in focus group discussions or individual interviews to capture significant change stories. The information was analysed and debated upon by the project management that resulted in the selection of MSC STORIES.

For each component of the programme, the field team conducted focus group discussions and individual interviews.

SECTION 2 COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AND NETWORKS





Most Significant Change stories are human stories that reflect the impact of small initiatives on lives that may have otherwise remained untouched. . [...] These are stories of people larger than life itself.



Community dialogue
in Upper Kurram



People and their Institutions

The entire purpose of community organisation is to give the poor a voice and vision to address issues that hinder their integration into mainstream development.

The core of the programme in FATA is based on the Rural Support Programme’s decentralised approach to poverty reduction and community empowerment. The approach promotes bottom-up community-driven participatory development where ‘institutions of people’ are organised and strengthened. The approach takes cognisance of the fact that communities have the capacity for self-help that they mobilise in the form of their social networks and ties of reciprocity during times of need. However, a catalyst organisation, like an RSP, can facilitate the process through technical and financial assistance, which enhances people’s knowledge and skills to mobilise resources, resolve conflicts, plan development through collective action for

common goals. This makes development people-centered, contextual and sustainable.

It also helps in enhancing local capacities in advocacy skills to articulate and negotiate with relevant authorities and other development actors to secure their rights and improve quality of services in the area. The entire purpose of community organisation is to give the poor a voice and vision to address issues that hinder their integration into mainstream development.

The formation of community institutions at various levels also promotes local self-governance that can facilitate social cohesion and equitable delivery of benefits to the poorest and marginalised segments among them.



Women participation has been ensured in community institutions building

Under this programme, community-based institutions have been established, encouraging formation of both men and women organisations. Wherever possible, women participation has been ensured in community institutions and network building. The process is supported through capacity building initiatives of locals in managerial and leadership skills, conflict resolution, disaster management, collective action and participatory development approaches.

Table 01- Statistical Brief of Community Institutions

(Data collected at the time of compilation of the report)

#	Community Institutions	Count	Count of M/W Members
1	Men CO	131	2,703
2	Women CO	08	311
3	Community Networks	09	227
4	WCIG	85	266
TOTAL		233	3,507

Customised Approach to Community Organisation in FATA

a) Community Networks replace Local Support Organisations in FATA

In KP, SRSP follows the RSP's approach to community organisation where households are organised at the community level and federated into village and apex level bodies called Local Support Organisations (LSOs). In FATA, due to its complex environment, SRSP has customised its community institutions and network formation. At the grass roots level are the COs, similar in composition and nature to community organisations in KP. However, the federating structures differ from the norm. Due to the conflicts in the area, 70% of households could not be organised to form LSOs. Hence, during the 2nd year of the programme, it was decided that the LSOs would not be formed. Nonetheless, the need for organising higher level bodies was acknowledged and COs in a particular area were organised into networks.

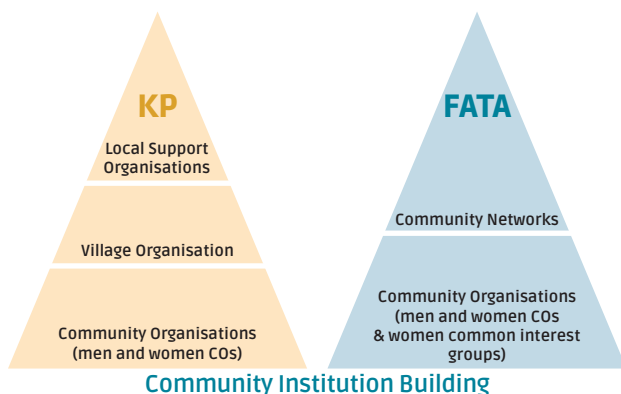
The networks are comprised of all the organisations working in a particular area. The office bearers of these organisations become members of the 'Network', which has a democratically elected body that runs it. The function of a network is similar to that of an LSO. Besides organising communities, raising resources and delivering services, it also builds the voice of the communities and expresses it at different forums to influence government policies and develop linkages with government and other bodies delivering services. It is therefore evident that 'Networks' address the issue of higher level organisations for communities in areas where LSOs cannot be formed.

b) Women Common Interest Groups replace Women Community Organisations

During three years of work with communities it became evident that residents of FATA are not opposed to the idea of promoting women development but per se are hesitant about allowing their women to be organised into larger groups of 20 or 25. This did not have any complicated reasons. In the tribal society of FATA, women are considered to be fragile. Hence, space for them is limited in public sphere. The practice of 'purdah' is, therefore, strictly observed and seen as a protection mechanism for women. *Purdah* is best observed when women remain inside their homes. When we talk of organising women into groups of 20-25, this entails traveling greater distances. In other words, it means violation of the 'purdah limits' for women - thus exposing them to the risk of being exploited. Therefore, the programme chose to modify its approach toward women inclusion. As one of the men in Kirman said,

'We are not against the education of our women. We want them to learn. But, our norms do not allow us to let women travel long distances. If I allow my wife to become part of a women community organisation, this means I will have to travel with her every time there is a community training or meeting. I prefer that my wife and her closest neighbours function as one small group and learn things that are beneficial for them and for our daughters'

It was therefore decided that women would be organised into smaller groups of 3-4 members and would be mobilised around a common interest. This has facilitated capacity building, increased participation, and helped boost their confidence when they come together to resolve issues.



...the programme chose to modify its approach toward women inclusion.



**Formation of Women
Common Interest
Group in Kurram
Agency.**



Formation of the First Men Community Organisation

It was an informal meeting where the team avoided delivering any structured 'First Dialogue'. The purpose was to identify an entry point for the programme in the village. During discussions, SRSP discovered that the communities had a tradition of organising a small village fund that they called a '*Murda Fund*' (in English, Funeral Fund). Each household was supposed to contribute some amount (whatever was affordable) in the fund that had been set up to support funeral activities for three days. (According to local tradition, it is the responsibility of the villagers to provide food to the family of the deceased and his mourners for three days). This local practice coincided with the concept of 'savings'- one of the cornerstones of community institution building. This became the 'entry point' for introducing the concept of organising communities into 'institutions of people'.

The culture of organising into small groups is not new to communities. In fact, presence of informal social capital is a distinctive feature of FATA (and remote rural areas in Pakistan). However, these are mostly informal structures that are formed to address a particular need of the community. For example, lack of access to legal systems has often encouraged communities to organize '*Jirga*' in most parts of KP and FATA.

The field team, planned its first dialogue in the village. They were well-prepared with the messages they wanted to get across in their first formal engagement with the communities. They were told that the community institutions the programme wanted to pursue would be holistic in nature. The social capital thus created would be broad-based and democratic in nature, unlike the *Jirga* that only includes tribal elders. Also, community institutions would promote collective action for addressing issues of empowerment, development and service delivery. It was not difficult for the communities to accept the idea because:

- » It was based on what they had been practicing for years
- » It was value-based and respected their norms
- » It retained and in fact enhanced social cohesion and harmony among the tribes and sub-tribes
- » It had a universal approach that offered incentives for everyone in the community

Hence, the first CO was formed in Kurram Agency and registered with SRSP. It called itself the, '*MCO Sohrab Kaley*'. It has 30 male members.

Most Significant Change Stories

Kerman Network

The Kerman Network formed under SRSP's FLADP has touched the lives of hundreds in the Kurram Agency through a holistic range of interventions. The stories of the locals help weave together a tapestry of life changing experiences. The common thread that runs through their stories is how the Kerman Network enabled them to identify and utilise their potential to bring about profound social and economic change in their lives, and the lives of those around them.

To address environmental concerns, forestation programmes have been introduced in Kurram Agency. According to the Chairman of the Kerman Network, Mr. Habibullah Jan Fani, 25,000 saplings have been planted in the region. This not only addresses environmental and climatic concerns in the long run but also enables the locals to address fuel wood concerns. As a result, those who lack resources, can prune and utilise the extra branches of the trees for fuel wood. Campaigns on the damaging effects of deforestation on soil erosion and climate have resulted in increased awareness and children are now participating in forestation campaigns.

The construction of tube wells in the region has gone a long way towards addressing water shortage in different parts of Kurram Agency. The programme has facilitated the establishment of two water supply schemes in the village which benefit approximately a hundred households. These schemes have been completed with an investment of Rs. 2,443,800 with 20 percent contribution from the community.

According to the locals, the FLADP has provided them with training, guidance and financial support to enable communities to become more organised to address water shortage. Drinking Water Supply Schemes, introduced by SRSP, have enabled people easy access to fresh drinking water. Prior to the introduction of the schemes, contaminated pond water was utilised for drinking purposes. Women no longer need to carry water in heavy containers for their daily use.

The story of Haji Hussain Ghulam, a member of the Kerman Network, illustrates the change brought about by the newly introduced water supply schemes.

'I have been living in Khwar colony for the past 35 years, during which we have forwarded countless applications to C&W and Public Health for the construction of irrigation tube wells. All our efforts have been in vain. However, with the help of SRSP, we started a scheme whereby the community contributed 20% of the cost for the installation of a tube well. Rs. 20 per household was collected as contribution from beneficiaries. We are now spared long journeys to collect water from far-flung areas. After the successful implementation of the scheme, four MCOs were formed in the region to enable people to address issues collectively. Prior to this, the community had no proper channels of social interaction. As a result of the organisation, our community has been effectively mobilised.'

Haji Hussain Ghulam, Member Kerman Network.

The fate of local farmers is no longer at the mercy of rains. The installation of tube wells has enabled a steady flow of water for irrigation, thus, enabling barren lands to be utilised for agriculture. Rice, wheat and tomatoes are now grown in parts of the region in abundance. The project has installed an irrigation channel with a cost of PKR 935,400. 20 percent of the cost was contributed by the community.

Agricultural training from FLADP has led to the introduction of a new variety of seeds for increased output. High yielding paddy crop, introduced from Swat, has proved to be a huge local success. According to Habibullah Fani, a large number of people from the village of *Yousef Khel* now process tomato ketchup as a profitable means of earning a living, all thanks to the agricultural training provided by SRSP.

"Before livestock training was provided by SRSP, there was no veterinarian in our village. So, we had to take our livestock to the nearest veterinary hospital in vehicles. Not only was this costly but it also decreased the chances of survival. Now we can treat and vaccinate livestock without having to travel outside our village"

Tahir Hussain, Member Kerman Network

Training provided to members in milk processing and marketing has enabled locals to benefit more from dairy farming and three have started their own enterprise.

Enterprise training has provided countless unemployed individuals an opportunity to make a living for themselves.

Training in tailoring has enabled women to make a living from their homes, thus addressing purdah concerns. Enterprise trainings have also enabled daily wagers to rely on a steadier source of income by acquiring skills. Irfan Masih and his wife, who opened up a beauty parlour with the help of SRSP's training, are just one of the many who have benefitted from these trainings.

'Before undergoing enterprise training, I was jobless and had a lot of debt. Thanks to the training, I now manage a canteen in the college with SRSP's cooperation. The canteen is running successfully and has given me the confidence to open up another tuck shop in the market. I am very thankful to SRSP for the help and contribution'

Syed Abdullah Hussain, General Secretary Kerman Network

The story of Muhammad Hussain, a cancer patient and member of the Kerman Network is one of resilience, courage and perseverance. As a physical training instructor, he was suddenly deprived of his sole means of earning a livelihood when he fell ill. Thus, along with the physical and emotional trauma of coping with illness, he was faced with the grave issue of how to finance his treatment. His only son was a high school student and not in a position to contribute financially to his father's treatment. With the help of SRSP, however, he was able to set up a small business of selling China items. The intervention helped him to cope with his illness by allowing him to pursue his treatment and also enabled him to continue with his education.

The network is also actively engaged in promoting education for all. It has set up a community-based school and provided the seed money or One Time Grant (OTG) to address the issue of teachers not taking classes due to nonpayment of salary. The network believes that promotion of education will slowly and gradually lead to a decline in child labour in the region and encourages more and more parents to send their children to local schools. To address security concerns, a bomb disposal squad has been set up with the help of SRSP.

Setting up of free medical camps has also created awareness in the population about different diseases and how to avoid them. It has led to a shift from reliance on old means of treatment to an acceptance of modern medicine.

Sectarian conflict has historically been rooted at the heart of social life in the Kurram Agency and SRSP's efforts have gone a long way towards addressing this issue in the region through the promotion of intra-sect harmony and peace. Fani explained,

'Our network resolved a long-standing conflict between our village and the neighbouring village through Badragah. The water source lies in the adjacent villages, which flow into Kirman through a channel. Whenever there was a dispute between the two villages, the adjacent village would divert the flow of water away from Kirman, thus making it difficult for locals to fetch water. Their women would collect water from dirty water channels flowing into the village. They had to manually filter dirt and sand. When the network was organised, many small community organisations came together to resolve the issue peacefully. They went as a team to the adjacent village to hold dialogues. FLADP facilitated the mediation process and informed the adjacent village that if they were to help Kirman, they would also be able to access development schemes. The problem was resolved. People in Kirman and those in the adjacent village enjoy friendly relations.'

A tournament was held in the region as a peace initiative to bring together the *shia'a* and *sunni* sect. Religious leaders and followers from both sides attended the event. This is a significant achievement as it reflects a change in mindset and a move towards greater tolerance.

"I would like to pay tribute to all the schemes and activities introduced by SRSP through FLADP, because these schemes are not just benefitting pockets of individuals...they are holistic, community based programmes that are bringing about profound social change in the communal life of the locals. The schemes, while addressing our socio economic needs, are also playing a vital role in ending the sectarian conflict"

Hussain Ghulam, Executive Body Member Kerman Network

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the common thread that runs through their stories is how the Kerman Network enabled them to identify and utilise their potential to bring about profound social and economic change in their lives

WCO Saint Anthony - the First Women Organisation in Parachinar (Kurram Agency)

Dr. Awlad Hussain (Team Lead for the programme in Kurram Agency) was once meeting the Political Agent in his office when, all of a sudden, a man came and sat beside him. He waited until the meeting was over. As the doctor was about to leave the office, the man followed him and asked if he could spare a few minutes. It turned out that the man was the pastor of the local church in Parachinar and had come to speak to the Political Agent about the hardships of the small Christian community in the area. When he heard Dr. Awlad was working for an organisation called FLADP, he tried to seek his help. Dr. Awlad took his address and promised to contact him on the following Sunday when people would gather in the local church for morning prayers.

Dr. Awlad, being a man of his word, fulfilled his promise unaware that his effort would eventually result in participation of over a hundred women in the programme. That day, the women dressed up in bright colours gathered into the church located in the colony behind the Army barracks in the main town.

When Dr. Awlad had introduced himself, one of the women stood up and said,

'We are employees of the government under the Town Committee, which generates its income from the collection of Mehsool at checkpoints. But, since the roads have closed down, there are no cars passing by and hence no collection of Mehsool. This, in turn, means we are not being paid our salaries. We have been to the Town Committee office but they say they have no money to pay for the salaries of any of their staff. We live in these small one-room houses that you see outside this window. They have been provided to us by the TC. A small amount for rent is deducted from our salaries. But, if there are no salaries, this means we cannot pay rent. They have told us that soon we will be asked to vacate our houses. But, where do we go then? How will we survive? This is our homeland and our ancestors have lived here. We have knocked at every door in the administration but there seems to be no solution to our problems.'

When Dr. Awlad asked the women about their expectations from him one of them replied, *'We are not beggars and neither do we ask you to feed us. But, our pastor*

told us you run an organisation and can help the poor. Some of our women know how to stitch and they make a small earning out of it. Could you please help us enhance our skills and establish small businesses?'

Dr. Awlad promised to get back to them in the following week as he wanted to discuss the matter with the SRSP HO before taking any final decision. While Dr. Awlad discussed the matter with the management, the women waited - sometimes with high hopes and at times a little doubtful of Dr. Awlad's commitment.

"We were suspicious of whether we were welcoming the right people or not and wondered if these people would actually serve us or if it was all talk."

Radiqa Jan (Now Member of WCO Saint Anthony)

"When our fears subsided, we attached high expectations with the organisation, because we are very poor. We hoped that it would help us find a way out of poverty by providing opportunities for skills development."

Tehmina Riaz (Now Member of WCO Saint Anthony)

A few days later, Awlad was in the office planning the day with his team, when he heard voices outside his room. For a few seconds, all present in his room fell silent in an attempt to identify the cause of the commotion. Realising what it was, Awlad rushed to open the door and found that the women, whom he had met at the church, had gathered in his office. They urged one of the elder ladies to the front who said, 'Doctor Sahib, we have come today to your office and we are not leaving until we have heard a positive reply to our request, for you are our only hope'. Dr. Awlad was overwhelmed by the fact that for the first time ever, women had gathered in his office for help, a rare event in the tribal region. He could do nothing but call off the meeting with his staff to address the women's concerns. He rang up the head office for advice. The moment he hung up the phone and told the group that FLADP would help women with skill development, there were smiles on the faces of all the women in his room. He bid them farewell and launched the first women's skill training programme in Parachinar with the Christian community.

Sumbal, now a member of the women community organisation, was also a trainee in the training on tailoring. She says,

"Finally, we have a respectful profession. The change has enabled us not only to provide for our families and find a way

out of poverty and face the world with confidence. It is heartening to see members of my community looking towards respectable professions. I can now earn a living for my family and have a better grasp on my savings."

Soon after the training, the women agreed to continue their collaboration with FLADP and organised themselves to initiate a drinking water supply scheme for their colony.

Their courage and persistence influenced and encouraged the Muslim communities to allow their women to organise themselves. Women Community Organisation Basoo is an example of one of the very first Muslim communities to form a women organisation, influenced by St. Andrew's Women Community Organisation.

"SRSP's intervention has enabled us to broaden our horizons and move outside our traditional way of thinking. We used to think only about ourselves and our domestic chores"

Sangita, a member of WCO Saint Anthony

Pewar Network

The success of SRSP's interventions in Kurram Agency symbolises the trust earned by the organisation through building confidence and enabling people to advocate for change at the local level, in an area rendered backward by poverty and ignorance. The onset of violence in and around the region fueled a cycle of persistent conflict as those with no prospects, particularly unemployed young men, were gradually joining the insurgency. The people of Kurram Agency were initially very suspicious of SRSP and its proposed interventions; however, by working through networks and connecting with locals at the grass roots level, it was able to gradually win over the hearts and minds of people. The Pewar Network was formed to cover the regions of *Gido, Haq Dara* and *Pewar Tangi*. In some of these areas, the Pakistani flag had never been hoisted and this fact alone captures the ground realities that SRSP had to work in.

The Pewar Network worked to unite the locals and went a step beyond addressing the socio-economic needs of the people. Through agricultural training, the locals were introduced to the concept of modern techniques of farming, use of better quality seeds and means of addressing different crop diseases. They no longer need to rely on experts for every problem they face and have become self reliant. Through SRSP enterprise interventions, handicapped people were given a chance to earn a respectable living for

themselves. The introduction of community based schools meant that people who could not afford to send their children to Parachinar for education could, for the first time ever in their lives, allow themselves to dream of a better future for their children. The local children need not remain illiterate because of poverty as they now have an opportunity to pursue education close to home. This has resulted in a change in their behaviour and a growing acknowledgment of the importance of manners and etiquettes in everyday lives.

"We are very poor people and couldn't afford to send our children to school because of which they remained illiterate. When community based schools were opened in our village, this problem was addressed. It allowed us to save Rs. 2,500 per month. All the children of the village are benefitting from the school, thanks to the FLADP scheme."

Liaqat Hussain, General Secretary Pewar Network



↑ Community meetings by Kerman Network in Kurram Agency.

The Network not only initiated various development activities relating to education, drinking water supply schemes and agricultural training but also worked to create a sense of unity and harmony within the local communities. Given the traditional, social and political structure of the tribal society, this feeling of harmony is perhaps one of SRSP's greatest contributions to the region. SRSP created awareness about peace and means of conflict resolution through seminars and acted as a catalyst for change in the mindsets of the locals. From a social life entangled in conflict, the locals are now gradually prioritising development and education, reflecting a change in their outlook towards life.

"Perhaps the biggest achievement of organising communities is the recognition of the importance of self help and of working together to address issues. An example of this is a small bridge near our village that is being built on a communal basis. The completion of the project will not only solve the problem of access, but will demonstrate the benefits of working together. We will no longer look up to others for help. The efforts of SRSP and FLADP have provided us with the tools and the motivation to address our problems through self-help despite the limited resources."

Hamid Hussain CO Member

The success of the Pekar Network lies in its approach, which emphasises on winning the hearts and minds of people by organising communities, undertaking development, promoting peace and education, and assuring locals a stake in the development process by designing it around the concept of self-reliance.

WCO Karmaney Kalay

I walk inside a mud house where a few women have gathered to conduct the monthly meeting of their community organisation. I am taken upstairs where the roof top leads into a verandah which has two adjacent rooms. In the verandah is a red carpet where nearly thirty women, all dressed in black *burqas* (veils), sit tightly packed together. A woman, who presides over the meeting, takes some notes in her register. As I enter, I see that I have diverted their attention. A few of them leave their places to greet me. I apologise for this hassle and ask the young lady to continue with her meeting, while I sit beside her to watch the proceedings.

The woman introduces herself as Tahira Bibi, President of

the Women Community Organisation. She is a government school teacher. One by one each of the participants introduce themselves. Zainab introduces herself as the Secretary of the WCO. She is also a government school teacher.

When I ask Tahira about her organisation, she narrates the story of its formation and their efforts.

"We used to hear our men talk about some people coming to them and helping them in organising their communities. When they had formed the organisations, they were asked to identify their most pressing need in consultation with us. Women thought they must have been ANGELS. We requested for assistance in initiating a drinking water supply scheme at our doorstep. A few days later, our men told us that those men (angels for us) had returned and offered to establish a drinking water supply scheme. We were asked to contribute some amount of the total cost. We collected about Rs. 119,000 and were successful in establishing our first development project for addressing women's issues."

Before the scheme, women had to walk for long hours to fetch water in pitchers that they carried on their heads. The pitchers would be placed on small woolen caps but the weight of the pitchers would leave marks on their heads. Many women would fall down while crossing muddy paths in the monsoons.

"The scheme has helped save our time. We now either rest during the hours we used to spend at collecting water or make tomato ketchup. FLADP has trained some of us in making ketchup. We also get time to socialise and participate in events."

Zainab, Secretary WCO.

"Women in my village would leave their small ones in zangotay (swings) to fetch water. By the time they got back, their children would be crying and the men would be shouting for food. FLADP has spared us all the tension."

Qibla Bibi (Member of the WCO)

Men in Kirman gradually became forth coming towards the FLADP staff and asked them to organise their women. Maria - a community resource person then - was sent in by the programme to organise women in 2012. The organisation has about 45 women members now. The members meet every month and collect a small amount that is given to the president of the men community organisation for depositing it in their account. Women have all the liberty to make choices, enjoying control over community savings. They have saved

about Rs. 20,000 so far. When a woman in the neighborhood passed away, the women members were able to pay for her funeral out of their savings.

When asked if women were afraid to join the Women Community Organisation, Bibi Tahira said.

"We feared that like others, SRSP would take money from us and disappear or they would do nothing but waste our time with their rhetoric. The fear was so prevalent that I even feared it would misuse our photographs."

Bibi Tahira, President Karmaney Kalay WCO

As SRSP began to work in the region, by addressing cultural sensibilities, gradually people's perceptions began to change.

"When our fears were addressed we were satisfied and we wanted to learn about SRSP's interventions for women. It was over whelming to think that we could contribute towards the prosperity of our families. We realised that we too could be considered important members of society and our families could have a chance for a better future."

Khadija, Member Karmaney Kaley WCO

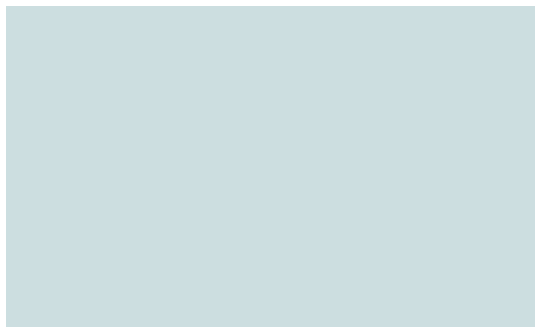
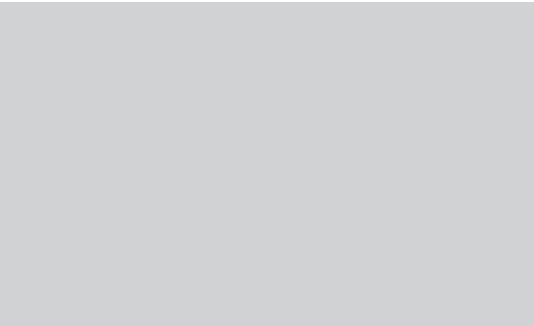
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Women have all the liberty to make choices, enjoying control over community savings.



Community participates in implementing infrastructure schemes in Kurram Agency.

SECTION 3 IMPROVING AND STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOODS



Opening Doors to Economic PROSPERITY

Under this component, the programme has made efforts to boost local economies and enhance access of the poor and marginalised to income generating opportunities through two models.

a) Fee-for-Service Model for Natural Resource Management-based Enterprises: The government extension agencies (livestock and agriculture agencies) are very weak in the area and unable to reach most farmers. Therefore, the programme has supported natural resource management practices in the area. This has been done through building capacities of local communities in prevention of losses, enhancing productivity and promoting marketing techniques. The trained community extension workers are a resource for communities that provide technical support to farmers, especially low-income farmers with small land holdings. The communities may pay the trained Community Resource Persons (CRPs) for their technical support and services.

- » Identification of Community Resource Persons/Potential Entrepreneurs through community-based organisations
- » Preparation/Review of Training Manuals and delivery of training events where special steps are taken to ensure the maximum participation of women
- » Post-Training follow-up and provision of technical support to the trained cadre
- » Establishment of Community-Based Mechanisms - this is especially important in cases where extension workers are trained. With the cooperation of community-based organisations, the communities decide on small remunerations that may be paid to the workers in return for their technical services.

b) Small-scale Enterprises: The poor and marginalised, particularly women, are being facilitated with the establishment of small-scale businesses. This is done through provision of financial and technical support to set-up businesses. Special emphasis was placed on identification of activities that are traditional to the area, are culturally acceptable to the communities and have market demand.

The process for implementing this component is explained as under:

- » Conducting Needs Assessment in the field so that community needs are identified and the programme is relevant to the local context



↑ A local entrepreneur at work in Kurram Agency

Most Significant Change Stories

Women Social Organiser: Maria Salamat

The First Woman Social Organiser in Parachinar

Maria Salamat, 26, is a resident of Parachinar town in Kurram Agency. She belongs to the Hindu community. Maria lives with her parents, four brothers and one sister. Together they live in a one room house. Maria's father is the sole bread winner of the family. His wages are not enough to feed a family of seven. With poverty, comes frustration. Maria's father is a patient of hypertension and depression.

Although Maria never complained about her problems to anyone, she realised that she could not sit back and watch her family suffer. In her own words, *'I decided I would not cry and start doing something'* Maria joined a school in Parachinar town as a teacher. She was paid Rs. 2,500 per month. Despite Maria's hard work and immense determination, her family was still finding it hard to make ends meet. Years went by and there was no one to guide Maria or free her of her worries.

During the course of time, SRSP started work in the Kurram Agency to assist the poor and marginalised communities of the area. Maria heard neighbors saying positive things about the SRSP programme. She went to the women with whom SRSP had held dialogues and became a part of SRSP's Skills Training. She emerged as one of the most active trainees and SRSP's team decided to engage her as a social activist in the area. She began working with SRSP's team as a Community Resource Person. She says, *'When I attended the first meeting with the staff of SRSP, I got confidence to improve my life. SRSP was seen as a beacon of hope by me.'*

While working with SRSP, Maria was provided with the opportunity to participate in different training courses. The capacity building events added value to Maria's work at field level. She succeeded in developing credibility and a strong reputation with the local communities in the area. She helped expand SRSP's work to other areas of the agency. She started to organise women and was able to form 10 community organisations in the area. Members of the WCOs had this to say about it *'We are very happy because it is through our community organisations that now we are able to meet each other and solve our problems.'*

Maria has high goals and the programme is committed to supporting her in her endeavors and to assist many others like her. She feels she still has a long way to go. Maria says that because of SRSP's support, she has been able to help herself and come out of what could have been a very challenging situation. She feels that she has developed self-confidence and says she would encourage all women to come forward and participate in the developmental initiatives. She said, *'I earn Rs. 25,000 a month and it is more than enough to meet my family's needs. SRSP-FATA programme is an opportunity for me and for the women of Kurram Agency to take lead and improve our living conditions. This was my dream and it has changed my life.'*

Women Entrepreneur: Honey Yonus Masih

Honey's testimonial is a story of how a young girl was able to turn her limitations into possibilities. She is now 21. She was 14 when her father passed away, leaving her mother to fend for her four daughters. In order to do so, she worked as a sweeper and although life was difficult, she could at least feed her children. As fate was to have it, a fire accident in their house left her handicapped and she could no longer work to earn a living. The family survived on the charity of others and was sucked into a vicious cycle of poverty from which there seemed no escape.

Three years after being introduced to SRSP, Honey is now an independent earning woman who has not only managed to provide for her family but has also arranged the marriage of two of her sisters. It all began when she joined a women community organisation set up by SRSP. As a member, she took advantage of the opportunity by participating in vocational (sewing) training arranged by SRSP. After completing the training, she was provided with a sewing machine. In a household where there were hardly any utensils or furniture, the machine seemed like a precious gift and occupied an important place in her home. It was more than a machine for them. It, in fact, was a promise of a bright future.

Fearful that they might ask her to return the machine, Honey set out to make the most of the situation by working long hours and in the process was able to gain a loyal

clientele. She eventually realised that SRSP would not ask her to return the machine and was able to continue her work with confidence.

"Today I would like to thank SRSP for helping me find a new meaning in life. From an unknown helpless girl, I am now a well sought after tailor...none of this would have been possible without the help and encouragement extended to me."

Honey Younis Masih

When I look into the mirror I now see a confident woman who is no longer a burden on her family but a respectable individual who can actively participate in decisions at her home and who has the courage to stand before the world and tell all that she too exists and can make a difference in the lives around her.'

Women Entrepreneur: Bibi Razia

Bibi Razia narrated her story for us as below;

'It is not easy being a woman in any under-privileged society. However, if you are unfortunate enough to be a poor illiterate woman in Pakistan, then the chances of upward mobility are almost non-existent. I was raised in a family that made me feel like a burden. Time and again, I would look at my poverty-struck family and wish there was something I could do to ease their suffering. I had thus grown up believing women to be useless members of society who could neither work nor contribute to household decisions.

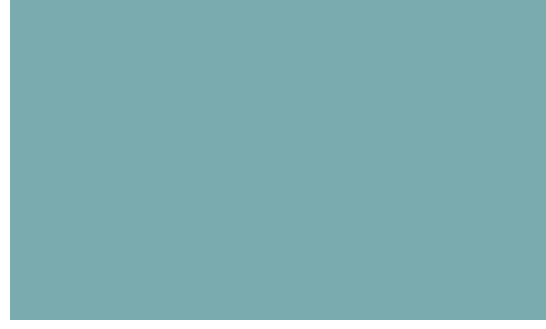
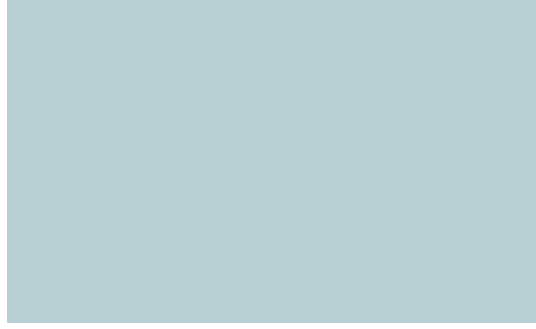
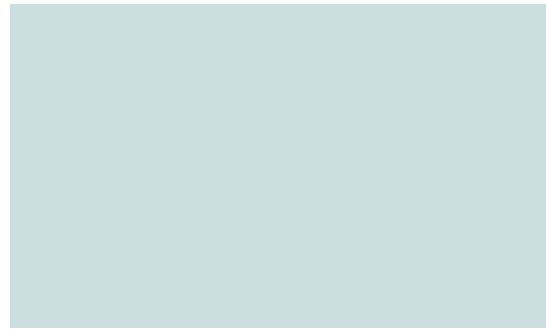
When SRSP intervened in my village by forming special interest groups, my perceptions, along with those of others around me began to change. I, along with two other ladies, formed a Women Common Interest Group (WCIG). Keeping in view the fact that we were illiterate and faced mobility issues, SRSP decided to help us by providing us one goat each. We were able to raise the animals and sell the milk for a steady source of income. With the passage of time, our earnings increased as we were able to rear and sell the offsprings of the goats.

If I look back at my life a few years ago, I was always worried and wanted to do something for my family but did not know how to do it. I did not have either the confidence or the resources to begin a small-scale business. I always thought this was a man's job. But, today, I make Rs. 5,000 every month which helps me contribute towards our household expenditure. I am trying to save some money so that I can buy another animal and expand my enterprise.'

↓ Skills training for women in Kurram Agency



SECTION 4 IMPROVING DELIVERY OF AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL SECTOR SERVICES



Increasing ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Under this component, SRSP has focused on the following aspects;

- » **On the demand side:** Awareness raising of communities on 'Right to Education' and 'Right to Improved Services' and helping them develop mechanisms for 'Voice and Accountability'
- » **On the supply side:** Increasing the access of communities to social sector services and creating an enabling environment for informing the state of community needs

Awareness raising of communities has been done through organising need-based social mobilisation activities where community institutions, and the general public are informed of basic human rights; roles of right-bearers and responsibilities of duty-bearers. This was done to create demand for improved services at the local level.

This essential element was supported by enhancing the ability of community institutions to voice their rights through people-centered advocacy.

On the other hand, the project also took initiatives to establish community-based schools in areas where there were no public and private schools. The aim was to increase the access of boys and girls to education. Furthermore, the government was facilitated through providing support for teachers' training and rehabilitation of government schools. In case of health services, medical camps were organised for men and women and training workshops were held for health workers.



This essential element was supported by enhancing the ability of community institutions to voice their rights through people-centered advocacy.

Most Significant Change Stories

Community-Based School Spina Shagay

Located on a mountain top in a deserted village is the community based school that villagers have preferred to name after their village as Community-Based School Spina Shagay. There is a small mud-thatched room - not at all spacious to accommodate children who use it. It is very dimly lit because it has only one small window. The sun shines warmly on the day of the visit, yet little ones gasp for air as it is suffocating inside. The teacher brings them outside where they all sit on the floor mat - not very spacious again.

With their small plastic boots carefully lined up against the wall, young girls sit with their heads down - covered in *Chaddars* - learning a lesson their teacher has taught them in the morning. The mountains echo with sweet humming of young girls and boys who are learning their English alphabet. As we draw closer, a few raise their heads and when our eyes meet, they quickly look away.

Spina Shagay happens to be the last village on this side of the border - 3 kms away from the Afghan village, Gul Ganda. It is at a drive of about two and a half hours from Parachinar town and is linked to the main road via an ill-built treacherous path that winds up and down along narrow curves. Not only does the terrain make the village inaccessible but the land mines also discourage one from visiting the place. Once a hideout of extremists, it is now protected by the Pakistan Army which has small check posts on the way to the village. These check posts have small solar panels installed for lighting up two bulbs at night.

There are about four hundred mud houses in the village and very small grocery shops. There are no means of sustainable livelihoods and men travel great distances to earn a living as daily wage workers. But, they cut down trees that are sold off to a local entrepreneur who takes them to the market and gives a small share to the wood cutters. Whatever earning a household makes, it is mainly spent on food consumption. Health or education are considered luxuries of life not meant for the poor of the village.

When the FLADP team went there for the first time, they held a dialogue with the community. Interestingly, some members chose not to identify themselves as belonging to the *Shia'a* sect. The village falls in the *Sunni* belt and Kurram

Agency is widely known for sectarian violence. However, one of the community members went up to him and said, *'I know who you are. Do not be afraid of us. We shall protect you and stand before you to face any harm aimed at you. I have lived in this village all my life and have spent every day hoping that one day there would be someone who would visit us, sit with us, talk to us and address our grievances. You seem to be the answer to my prayers. Even if you cannot do anything for us, I am obliged that you took the time to think about us and travel all the way to meet us.'* This boosted the confidence level of our staff and the programme began to organise the first men community organisation in the area.

When it came to the needs assessment exercise, the staff was surprised to hear the community demand a school for their children. They said that they wanted their children to learn and grow-up to be like the programme staff who work to support others. FLADP therefore extended support and the very first school was established in the village.

Starting with a small number, this school now hosts 121 students - all girls. The teacher comes from the nearby village because there was no literate person in Spina Shagay. The villagers said, *'Our people have remained illiterate for generations. We do not allow our daughters to attend schools that are further away from our homes. The community-based school has given us the opportunity to educate our daughters and sons alike.'*

A parent of a child who happens to be there contributes to the discussion and says, *'this school has become a ray of hope for us - the best thing is that it is based in our own village. We can visit it anytime we want. We also trust the teacher who takes the pain to travel every day to teach our children. We are thankful to him and pray that he succeeds in his life.'*

SRSP is now planning to provide the village with access to electricity by building a micro-hydel power unit so that the school can have better facilities.



When it came to the needs assessment exercise, the staff was surprised to hear the community demand a school for their children.

Government Girls' High School Parachinar

The Government Girls' High School Parachinar is located in the town on the main road. A small light blue colored gate is guarded by a black uniformed watchman who lets us in without any hesitation as Dr. Awlad Hussain is a familiar figure in the area.

Behind the gate stands the huge stone building of the high school. We turn left to find ourselves facing the faculty rooms, the office of the head teacher, a common room for teachers and a child care room where 'zangotay' (swing) hangs for the newborns of teachers.

We are greeted by the head teacher, Maharaj, who takes us to her room and tells us that the school has enrolment of 1,200 girls, from primary to high school. There are only 14 teachers in the school which means that for every 86 students, there is only one teacher. The head teacher, who has been with this school since 2002, has immense experience in her field. In order to manage the work load, she has divided each class into groups of 8-10 girls. Each group has a leader who takes records of the girls' attendance, their performance and provides support when and as required to the group mates. Every afternoon, before the closing time, group leaders meet the teachers and provide them reports on the tasks assigned to them. The teachers deliver lessons and give assignments. The group leaders follow-up with their group members on their work and provide them support. In case the group has difficulty in doing the assignment, the group leader informs the teacher for a follow-up exercise.

The enrolment is high and number of teachers is low. It is difficult for a teacher to tutor each student individually. Also, school days are limited and the syllabus is lengthy. The teachers are continuously under pressure to complete the course and help students prepare for exams at the end of the year. The presence of group leaders acts as extended arms of teachers to ensure that problems of all students are recorded and addressed appropriately.

During the meeting, the head teacher tells us that a school of 1,200 does not have adequate toilet facilities for the students. There is no clean drinking water supply. She tried seeking support from the agency education department, agency administration and the local representatives but her efforts were in vain. One day she received an invitation from one of the nearby schools that was holding a function. When she arrived there, she found that the function is arranged by SRSP's FLADP. She met Dr. Awlad and he promised to return to her after he had discussed the issue with his management.

Within a week, she heard back from FLADP. It wasn't long before FLADP began to organise Parent Teacher Council in the school and started rehabilitating school toilets. Shortly afterwards, work began and six toilets and a drinking water supply scheme were established in the school with Rs. 600,000.

On the day of the visit, the girls were taking their exams but spared a few minutes to speak with us. One of the girls said, *'my father was never very happy about me attending the school. In fact, my attendance was irregular. This is because there were no proper toilets in the school and we had to either wait until closing time or go outside in the nearby field. As I am growing up, my father did not like this and he would keep me from attending school regularly. I am so happy that this issue has been resolved and I can now attend my school regularly.'*



➔ Rehabilitation of a public school for girls in Kurram Agency

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