Note for the Record

Field Visits to the Districts of the Sindh Rural Support Organisation
July 5-8, 2015

COO/RSPN

July 14, 2015

Day 0: Arrival at Sukkur: At the invitation of Mr Muhammad Dittal, Acting CEO SRSO, Khaleel Tetlay, COO RSPN, undertook a visit to Sukkur from July 5 to July 8, 2015. COO arrived at Sukkur at 12 noon on Sunday July 5, 2015. It was blistering hot arrival and the first thing that COO did was to buy a cotton scarf for protection of his head and neck from the sun and the heat. This scarf served its purpose very well over the coming days in KashmoreKandkot, Jacobabad, Shikarpur and Ghotki districts. After the short travel to the SRSO Guest House, it was wonderful to see the air conditioners working and after a quick hot shower (taps yielded only hot water!), COO relaxed. Later in the afternoon, ACEO SRSO phoned and the field visit plans were discussed and finalised.

Day 1: Visit to Kashmore Kandkot district: On Monday July 6, 2015, COO left SRSO Guest House at 8 am for Kandkot town along with Mr Imtiaz (of USAID Health Systems Strengthening Project of RSPN that SRSO is implementing in Kandkot and Jacobabad districts). The team reached SRSO District Office at Kandkot at 10 am. Mr Asad Ali Jatoi, SRSO District Manager, welcomed the team and made a short presentation on SRSO’s work in the district. SRSO began work in Kashmore Kandkot district in 2007 and accelerated the pace from 2009 when the Sindh Government supported Union Council-based Poverty Reduction Programme (UCBPRP). Total value of UCBPRP PC-1 was Rs 3,336 million for two districts of Shikarpur and KashmoreKandkot.

There are 37 Union Councils in Kashmore Kandkot district. SRSO is working in 29 rural UCs. There are a total of 87,535 rural households in the district and SRSO has mobilised 80,450 (92% household coverage) into 2,654 Community Organisations, 1,034 Village Organisations and 27 Local Support Organisations. This entire mobilisation was undertaken under UCBPRP. The total cost of UCBPRP for Kashmore Kandkot district was about Rs 1,000 million, covering the cost of social mobilisation, Community Investment Fund, community physical infrastructure, vocational training, micro health insurance, Income Generation Grants, low cost housing, and capacity building of people’s own organisations. After the completion of UCBPRP, GOS is supporting the ‘UCBPRP Maintenance Phase’ project which covers essential staffing and administration costs of SRSO to continue with its support to the network of the people’s own organisations, e.g. COs, VOs, and LSOs.

Apart from UCBPRP, SRSO has also undertaken other initiatives to support the organised households and people’s institutions. After the 2010 floods, GOS supported the construction of 2,600 two-room houses in 13 villages of the district. GOS provided Rs 70,000 per household. Total GOS support was Rs 182 million for this project. Other components of the project included community physical infrastructure (soling/brick lining of lanes, sewage side drains) and provision of hand pumps. SRSO also implemented the RSPN’s USAID funded ‘Sindh Agricultural Recovery Project’ (SARP) project, under which technical advice, training, quality
seeds, fertiliser, and small cash grants were provided for sunflower growing after the 2010 floods. Previously sunflower was not grown in the districts. Previous cropping pattern was rice—fallow-wheat-rice. After rice harvest and before wheat planting there was a fallow period of about three months. Due to the success of SARP, today about 10-12,000 acres of sunflower are grown in the district, and the new cropping pattern is rice-sunflower-wheat. Hence farmers are able to grow an additional cash crop.

Working with GOS, SRSO is implementing ‘Cluster School’ Project in the district. Over 50 closed schools have also been re-opened around the cluster school which has a new building and facilities, including classrooms, computer rooms, library, kitchen, staff room and own transport. In this 12 room Cluster School there are 300 children (boys and girls) studying up to grade 8, and in the coming years grade 9 and grade 10 classes are also planned. The Cluster School is jointly managed by SRSO and the local LSO. In the re-opened primary schools there are now 3,600 children enrolled. These schools have teachers, furniture, water, and wash rooms. Students are provided with stationery, text books and clothes as well.

SRSO is also working with Pakistan Petroleum Limited and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund to support communities in three UCs where PPL has its field operations. Under this Rs 60 million project, community infrastructure has been improved, including lining of water courses and building of culverts.

Under the RSPN’s USAID HSS Project, SRSO has intervened in all 37 UCs of district (both rural and urban) for community awareness raising for EPI campaigns. HSS is being implemented through the LSOs and over 2,200 settlements have been reached. Children under 23 months and pregnant mothers are to be registered and mobilised so that when the government vaccinators visit the community according to the micro plan prepared by EPI Department, the women and children are ready. Between August 2014 and June 2015, 28,549 children and 14,051 pregnant women were vaccinated. CO/VO/LSO leaders have been playing a key role in community mobilisation for EPI programme. There are 73 government vaccinators in the district. Under the project, JSI has provided them with 54 motor cycles to improve their mobility and reach out to the communities.

For a long time, the vaccinators were not operational and working and they were just drawing their salaries (may be the correct word should be the political wazeefaa -grant). Now all community leaders have been provided with cell numbers of EPI Department and Health Department senior staff members. If and when the vaccinators do not come for planned vaccination sessions then the community leaders start to send SMS messages. (Later in the day COO met one government Health Department official who said that for eight years he had a very good job and now due to this project he has very bad headache!!). As a result of this project, EPI programme is becoming more effective.

Later District Health Officer Kashmore Kandkot joined the team for a visit to village Goth Yar Muhammad Nindwani where EPI vaccination was underway. Vaccination was taking place outside an Otaq (guest room of a village notable). Community focal person had a list of registered children and women. Two vaccinators were present; one was filling in the Vaccination Cards and one was vaccinating the children. DHO was quite happy to see the large presence of
women and children who had come for vaccination. Community focal person said that there are three vaccination sites in the village and thus far all registered children and women are being vaccinated. Upon asking by DHO, CFP said that the registration is also updated as and when new babies are born and when women get pregnant. COO informed DHO that there are 27 LSOs in Kashmore Kandkot and that similar work is happening in all of them with the support of the EPI and Health Departments. DHO appreciated the efforts of SRSO at mobilising the communities. COO informed DHO that the Rural Support Programme’s strongly believe that scale up can only happen with the support of the government and that this HSS work in the EPI sector is an example of that. SRSO could only arrange vaccination in one village or at most in one UC. However, with the support of GOS and EPI and Health Departments, this work is now taking place in all settlements/goths, villages and UCs of Kashmore Kandkot.

After leaving Yar Muhammad Nindwani village, the team moved to participate in a meeting of LSO Roshni of UC Gulwali, Taluka Nangwani. Dr Ghulam Rasool Samejo (GRS), SRSO Regional Manager, has also joined the team. DHO was amazed to see 15 women sitting in order and listened with great attention to the presentation by the LSO President. UC Gulwali has 78 goths/settlement/villages, all are now represented in the LSO through 60 VOs. LSO general body has 60 members (one per VO) and executive body has 9 members. LSO covers a total population of 28,768. UC Gulwali has 3,396 households and 52% have been organised. However, as the table below shows, 100% of the households falling in the two lowest categories (the poor and poorest categories) have been organised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC Band</th>
<th>Total households</th>
<th>Organised households</th>
<th>% Organised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-11</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-23</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-100</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,386</td>
<td>1,755</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CIF performance presented by the LSO President is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Disbursed Amount</th>
<th>Revolving Received</th>
<th>Remaining Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Amount</td>
<td>8,233,000</td>
<td>7,917,500</td>
<td>315,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Of V.O</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Of Cos</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total HH</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average/loan</td>
<td>10,343</td>
<td>11,073</td>
<td>3,895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LSO President said that for some time there was no interest in CIF recovery. However, when recently SRSO became more active and contacted and started to work with LSO, large amounts were recovered from borrowers and were deposited with VOs. Out of the total amount of Rs 8.233 million, only Rs 315,500 is yet to be recovered from 81 borrowers from two VOs (representing 8 COs). LSO and VO leaders are making best efforts to recover this last amount.

LSO is also actively involved in the other projects/activities:

- HSS EPI project (1306 children and 233 pregnant women have been vaccinated).
- Prime Minister’s Interest Free Loan Scheme (163 members from 14 VOs have accessed Rs 2.891 million under this scheme).
- IGG 43 members from 39 COs (from 14 VOs) have accessed Rs 416,000 (average of Rs. 9,700).
- Low cost housing – 206 members from two VOs. Average cost per two-room house Rs 79,000 (Rs 70,000 from GOS and Rs 9,000 own contribution).
- Hand pumps – 18 households received hand pumps at a cost of Rs 70,000.
- Training – 146 males and 220 females received various vocational training in diverse fields.
- 30 Traditional Birth Attendants trained.

Then the LSO President spoke about LSO’s own initiatives:

- Worked with the Education Department for reopening of 8 closed primary schools. Started an enrolment campaign in nearby villages and conducted meetings in VOs for enrolment at SRSO’s Cluster School located at Bahdur Khoso.
- Met with DC and finally an electric transformer was installed at VO Rasoolabad.
- LSO developed linkage with Acted International NGO and enabled 16 VOs to receive agricultural inputs.
- LSO supported 60 females for receiving BISP cash entitlements and also supported 30 BISP beneficiaries to get re-activation of 30 block BISP cards through conducting meetings with district BISP Staff.

Finally, the LSO President spoke about LSO’s future plans:

- To support VOs to improve the management of CIF, ensure full recovery of the remaining outstanding amount, and provide access to other eligible households.
- To ensure complete registration and vaccination of children and pregnant women.
- To ensure complete enrolment of children at schools and ensure their attendance.
- To develop linkages with different stakeholders for development and benefit of households in the UC, with a focus on improving rural women’s lives.

LSO President’s presentation of LSO’s work and achievements was most impressive and left DHO dazzled. His first question to GRS was this: Does SRSO has only one LSO in the district? GRS replied that SRSO has 27 LSOs in the district and that all of them are structured in the same way, building on the foundation of COs, which are then federated into VOs, and which in turn are federated into LSOs. DHO asked about the Rs 8.2 million in CIF; who had provided this
amount. COO answered that CIF was an integral component of the GOS supported UCBPRP. And CIF was provided to all VOs in KashmoreKandkot with the support of GOS. COO added that while RSPN and SRSO had piloted CIF in one or two communities, it could only be scaled up with GOS support. DHO said that he will talk to the Deputy Commissioner and also invite him to visit LSOs. Then DHO asked the LSO leaders about Lady Health Workers and how LSO relates to them. LSO President said that some LHW are quite active and support COs and VOs. However, more support and direction is needed from the top to further encourage all LHWs of UC Gulwali to closely work with COs/VOs/LSO. DHO agreed to look into the matter. COO asked whether during polio campaigns, CO/VOs supported the polio teams during their vaccination campaigns. LSO President replied that some teams ask for support which then is provided whereas other teams go into communities directly and it is difficult to say anything about their work and progress. At this point DHO said that during the polio campaign spread over four days, local volunteers are paid Rs 250 per day by Department of Health, and if LSO could facilitate the Department in the identification of such volunteers it would be very welcome. DHO also added that these volunteers would only work in their own localities.

At the end of the meeting, GRS asked COO to say a few words. COO first congratulated the LSO leaders and members for the wonderful work that they are doing. COO reminded them that it was SRSO which took the initiative of organising only rural women into CO, VO and LSO framework. When this was initiated there were apprehensions whether the rural women of Sindh would be able to take up this new and vast challenge. Today’s meeting and listening to women leaders of COs/VOs/LSO has re-affirmed that SRSO’s initial vision was very sound. Women, when organised, can outperform men, since the issues of social mobilisation and community development are most relevant to women. COO added that today during the drive to UC Gulwali he crossed many bus stops, small settlements and small townships, etc., and each tea house and tea stall was full of men, even in Ramazan! Yet, COO also saw tens and hundreds of women undertaking the difficult task of rice transplanting under the hot midday sun. While everyone is impacted by poverty, it is the rural women who are most impacted and they are impacted on a daily basis as they have to feed and take care of their children. In light of this the work of women COs, VOs and LSO is most impressive. Then COO went to say that what has been presented while good and very important, is not the real function of LSO. The real function of LSO is to support the institutional development of member VOs, and it is the main function of VOs to support the institutional development of COs, for CO/VOs are the very foundation of LSO; if the foundation is weak the whole social building will collapse. COO asked the LSO to include one item in their future plans – to support and strengthen the VOs and ensuring accountability and transparency in their operations and functioning. Finally, COO suggested that the LSO presentation should also mention the number of COs in UC and their total savings. LSO President thanked COO for his suggestions.

After a short break at Kandkot, the team drove to Shikarpur and then on to Sukkur, reaching SRSO Guest House at 730 pm.
Day 2: Meeting at SRSO and Visit to Jacobabad district: On Tuesday July 7, 2015, at 930 am COO met with the senior staff members of SRSO that ACEO SRSO had kindly facilitated. COO began by thanking ACEO for providing the opportunity to meet with SRSO friends and colleagues once more. COO said that he wants to discuss three points: 1) make a presentation on RSPN so that all SRSO colleagues become more familiar about the network of RSPs, 2) raise some important points relating to RSPN projects implemented by SRSO so that in the future due consideration is paid to them, and 3) make presentation on upcoming EU SUCCESS Programme so that everyone becomes more familiar with this strategic programme.
COO went over the main RSPN presentation. COO highlighted that RSPN, while legally a separate and independent organisation, is in fact a network organisation of the Rural Support Programmes, for it was the RSPs that set up RSPN. The mandate of RSPN was given by its Board which has representatives from each RSP in the country. RSPN is revising its five-year strategy for 2015-2019. In all the internal and external discussions thus far, everyone has highlighted roles and functions for RSPN that are very much the same as given by the Board in 2000, when RSPN was set up by RSPs. Over next five years, RSPN will continue to focus on:

- To serve as a **one-stop-shop in undertaking projects** with government, donors and others, that are in turn sub-contracted to RSPs;
- To bring strength to the **RSP brand name** and that of social mobilization, by acting as a common, national level platform for RSPs;
- RSPN provides **national outreach** to 6.04 million organized households in Pakistan;
- To encourage a meeting of the minds of the RSPs and strengthen the common **strategic direction** of RSPs;
- To provide **back-up support in selected sectors**, to the RSPs i.e. M&E, gender, social mobilization, etc., through the RSP Resource Groups: SMRT, GRG, MER RG, SS RG and FACT;
- To **document knowledge** and lessons learnt from the RSPs and advocate these within the RSP community, to government, donors and other interested parties;
- To undertake broader **communication** of the work of RSPs;
- To undertake **innovations** for broader replication; and
- To continue with **policy advocacy** efforts for the promotion of the community-driven development approach of RSPs.

COO rounded up this part of the meeting by saying that the very strengths of RSPs are the very strengths of RSPN; without RSPs, RSPN is nothing. Hence, a key role of RSPN is to continue to strive to work closely with RSPs.

Coming to the second point of the presentation, COO said that as per guidance of the Board RSPN has been raising funds through projects for RSPs. Since 2000, RSPN has raised almost USD 200 million for RSPs through small and very large projects. RSPN signs an agreement with a donor after RSPs have shown willingness to partner in the said project. Then RSPN signs sub-agreements with RSPs. However, according to the main agreement and as per Board guidance, RSPN is then fully responsible to ensure that the project is implemented properly and that project funds are properly funds are used as per agreement. RSPN has to ensure that the project activities take place as agreed and on schedule. Furthermore RSPN has to ensure that compliance and internal audit reports are clear. Over the past few years, at Board’s direction, RSPN has strengthened its compliance and internal audit functions. Therefore when the compliance and internal audit reports show the repeat occurrences of past oversights then obviously there is a major concern. Currently SRSO is implementing several of RSPN projects. In March 2015, RSPN internal audit and compliance team visited Ghotki district for the Unicef Child Rights Project. Several instances of lack of oversight and mistakes were noted. It is very good that SRSO has corrected all of them. However, when the Internal Audit Report was presented at the last RSPN BOD Audit Committee meeting, there was on stinking but relevant comment: “Have you learnt nothing from the SARP experience?” While everyone is busy in doing their work, the
issue of quality of their work is also important. And this becomes even more important in all finance and procurement related matters. Here there has to be an attitudinal shift to have the capacity to pay attention to detail. While RSPN will continue to work to access more resources for RSPs, the RSPs also have to pay a little more attention to their own systems and the operationalization of their own systems. COO said that he is happy to hear that SRSO now has its own Internal Audit team of 6/7 members, and hopes that they will stringently and diligently support other SRSO colleagues so that internal audit objections and paragraphs are minimised, if not removed altogether.

Finally, COO briefly discussed the origins of the SUCCESS Programme and stated that the SUCCESS Programme is firmly based on the approach first developed by SRSO for UCBPRP. Then COO made a presentation on the SUCCESS Programme, highlighting its overall objectives and strategy. COO added that EU has asked RSPN to be part of the Programme as its mandate and the role that EU envisages for RSPN overlap to a great extent. Essentially, EU wants RSPN to ensure that the three implementing partners (SRSO, NRSP and TRDP) follow a standard approach to SUCCESS implementation, monitoring and reporting. RSPN, as the network organisation of RSPs, is best placed to ensure this. Standardisation involves the development of a standard Programme Implementation Manual (PIM) and that this will be development jointly by all four SUCCESS Programme partners, and then to ensure its uniform implementation. PIM will cover all key components of the SUCCESS Programme: social mobilisation (CO/VO/LSO/Tehsil Network of LSOs/District Networks of LSOs) and CIF, community infrastructure, micro health insurance, vocational training, etc. For each section there will be key performance indicators as well as process indicators.

RSPN’s component of the SUCCESS Programme will cover designing of methodologies for RSPs to collect baseline information, develop and implement the research component in two UCs, devise a communication strategy, supporting lesson learning visits, organised national events, knowledge management, regional cooperation and support policy advocacy. COO added that while the SUCCESS programme will be implemented in eight districts of Sindh, GOS has also agreed to provide support for other districts of Sindh.

Finally, COO said that EU is supporting SRSP to implement the PEACE programme in the Malakand division. According to SRSP, EU is a very good donor but also very difficult one when it comes to compliance and internal financial management and procurement. If SOPs are properly followed, EU will simply ask the concerned organisation to return/refund/reimburse the money already spent. Hence SRSO should identify staff for EU SUCCESS Programme who can pay attention to detail, who can follow SOPs, and if they have any questions then are not afraid to ask in a timely manner. COO said that yesterday he heard one government employee complain that before the HSS project his life was easy, and now it has become difficult since he has to do more, much more – now he just has to do his duty for which he was employed. RSP employees also have a duty, and that duty is to perform their duties in manner that not only benefits the organised communities but also meets all contractual requirements, hence contributing to further strengthening of the RSP brand. These are essential. RSPN looks forward to working with SRSO, NRSP and TRDP to implement this integrated programme.
Then COO asked if the participants have any questions. One participant asked about the coordination mechanism for this large programme with four partners. COO said that some of the older SRSO colleagues will remember that when the BISP National Poverty Survey was being undertaken in 68 districts covering 14,000,000 households in rural and urban areas, RSPN Board had set up ‘RSPs BISP Committee’, which comprised CEOs from AKRSP, SRSP, SRSO, TRDP, NRSP and RSPN. Shoaib Sultan Khan sahib was the chairman of this RSPs BISP Committee. Similarly, there are plans to set up the ‘RSPs SUCCESS Committee’ with CEOs from SRSO, NRSP, TRDP and RSPN as members and Shoaib sahib as its chairman. This should support the process of smooth coordination and standardisation during the implementation and reporting phases of the Programme.

At this point Mr Jamal Shoro, Regional Manager Larkana Kambar Shahdadkot and SRSP SUCCESS Focal Person, said that according to the main EU document about the SUCCESS programme, it is the RSPN’s responsibility to conduct the base line surveys. COO replied that what was not clear in the EU document has been cleared in the RSPN proposal submitted to EU. In the just made presentation, it has again be cleared that RSPN will devise the methodology for the baseline and that then the RSPs will conduct the survey by outsourcing to a third party. In addition, COO asked Mr Shoro as to why he always raises this particular point in relation to SUCCESS? Are there no other issues of concern to him? Given that the SUCCESS programme is to be implemented across the whole of districts of Larkana and Kambar Shahdadkot, surely there must be issues, queries about programming related activities. Queries about CO/VO/LSO structures and how taluka and district level LSO networks are to be fostered and what are their expected roles? About standardisation of the CIF component and it’s mainstreaming across the three RSPs? About incorporating lessons learnt from UCBPRP and other projects relevant to SUCCESS? How has Mr Shoro in touch and contact with TRDP and NRSP? Finally, COO said that if ACEO SRSO is clear about the point then what is the issue with Mr Shoro?

COO thanked ACEO SRSO for providing the occasion to meet with senior staff members. COO also thanked the staff members and hoped that there will be further opportunities to meet each other, either in Sukkur or in Islamabad.

At 1130 am, ACEO SRSO, COO and GRS, along with Ms Nasreen Shaikh, Project Manager HSS, left of Taluka Thul of Jacobabad district, on the border with Balochistan. The team arrived and was welcomed by Mr Manzoor Jalbani District Manager Jacobabad. Mr Jalbani said that the day’s programme includes two visits. First, a visit to village Goth Ali Bakhsh Sarki, where an EPI vaccination campaign under HSS project was underway, and then a visit to a local LSO
Itehad. At Ali Bakhsh Sarki, small children and pregnant women were gathered and waiting for their vaccination at a private house of a village notable. The EPI Department Vaccinators were undertaking the vaccination. CFP was reading out the names of the children and women. One Vaccinator was filling in Vaccination Cards and the other one was conducting vaccination. COO asked Nasreen about the vaccination process in the village before the HSS project. Nasreen replied that earlier the vaccinators were not active and hardly did any vaccination. Fictional reports were shared with seniors. Now, especially with the development of Micro Plans by EPI Department and social mobilisation by SRSO through the involvement of CO/VO/LSO framework, coverage of vaccination is expanding. Health and EPI Department seniors are now very pleased by the progress despite some lack of interest by Vaccinators. However, the trend over past few months is quite positive and all targets for vaccination of young children and pregnant women will be fulfilled. Nasreen in particular highlighted the value of providing cell numbers to CFP and community leaders; now when the Vaccinators do not come on schedule, SMS messages are sent to Department’s senior officers. This has begun to yield positive change in the attitude and behaviour of Vaccinators.

After Ali Bakhsh Sarki, the team moved to attend a meeting of LSO Itehad, UC Sherwah. The LSO President welcomed the team and then made a short presentation. The LSO was fostered on October 7, 2013. In UC Sherwah, 2,542 households have been mobilised into 149 women only COs, and these COs have been federated into 52 VOs. These COs/VOs are the foundation of the LSO. The table below shows the Poverty Score wise distribution of organised households in LSO Itehad. Of all the organised households, 70% of the households fall into the bottom three PSC categories, i.e. 70% of the organised households is poor or very poor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC Category</th>
<th># HHs Organised</th>
<th>% HHs Organised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-11</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-23</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-100</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LSO President then spoke about CIF. She said that CIF total amount with 42 VOs was Rs. 7.451 million. This had been disbursed to 592 beneficiaries. Recent efforts at re-activation of CIF have been quite successful, and now only about Rs 500,000 are outstanding in 4 VOs. Efforts are being made by COs/VOs/LSO to recover this amount. Under UCBPRP, 220 men and women had attended various vocational trainings.

Recently, LSO Itehad had implemented one SRSO/RSPN project for the benefit of 30 poorest households. Using PSC, poorest households were identified. They were then trained in livestock
management. SRSO involved the LSO in the procurement process. Each Heifer was medically checked, weighed and tagged, and then distributed to the households. Three bags of animal feed and blocks of salt were also provided. Mr Sarki, local Member of Provincial Assembly, was the chief guest at the handing over ceremony. Mr Sarki was very pleased after learning more about the LSO and its work, and promised to support it more. At the this point COO asked Mr Jalbani that given about Rs 500,000 of CIF funds are in default, why was this LSO selected for the SRSO/RSPN project? Before Mr Jalbani could answer, the LSO President said that the four default VOs have not been involved in the Heifer project.

LSO President then spoke of various self-help initiatives in the education and health sectors. LSO is encouraging member VO/COs to increase enrolment at schools. They are trying to cooperate with LHWs and polio teams. LSO President then spoke about LSO’s future plans that included developing and strengthening links with local stakeholders including Health, Education, EPI, Agriculture and Livestock Departments, local politicians and opinion makers, and other NGOs. ACEO SRSO thanked the LSO President for her presentation and assured her and other participants that SRSO will continue to support CO/VO/LSOs in the district. However, these organisations also have a responsibility to ensure sound performance and proper recording keeping of their work, especially financial records. Then COO was asked to say few words. COO said that this Sherwah Union Council is quite remote, almost on the border with Balochistan. Despite this remoteness, the women of Sherwah have shown that SRSO’s approach of social mobilisation through women only COs/VOs/LSOs is very meaningful. LSO Itehad has achieved a great deal, yet life is still tough and much more needs to be done. A key role of LSO is to ensure that its members COs/VOs are active and keeping good records. These are the foundation of the LSO; if the foundation is weak then the whole social structure will collapse like a house of cards. LSO must pay particular attention to CIF and provide full support to VOs in its sound management, disbursement and full recovery. CIF is the social cement that not only benefits the individual member households but also that binds together the VOs. Sustainable management of CIF will make a significant contribution to raising households’ incomes and also strengthen the people’s own organisations.

Before leaving the LSO, visiting team met with two households who had received Heifers. One household had a poverty score of 8 and another’s score was zero. Women of both households were very pleased with their new Heifers. The animals were kept in clean and tidy sheds. They are being fed and watered properly. It is expected that they will deliver the first batch of calves within 12-18 months. Under the TOP, the calves will be handed back to LSO for further on-ward distribution to other poor households. COO asked Mr Jalbani to ensure that monitoring of animals takes place on a regular basis and that households do continue to feed them properly. As this point, COO recounted his first experience of Heifers at AKRSP Gilgit to Mr Jalbani. In the winter of 1987/88, COO went on a monitoring visit to Juglote to see the Heifer Project. At one village he saw one very thin cow; it was very clear that this cow is not being fed properly. A farmer came by. COO asked him about the Heifer Project in the village. The farmer replied that under the project Heifers have been provided to the village. COO asked if the farmer could kindly show him one Heifer. The farmer pointed to the thin cow in the field and said that is one the Heifers received. COO then asked as to why the animal is not properly fed? The farmer replied that if the cow does not give milk, why should they feed it? COO asked Mr Jalbani to
keep this story in mind. Heifers have to be looked after well NOW, so that later they provide healthy calves and plentiful milk.

Nasreen checking CFP lists at Ali Bakhsh Sarki

EPI Vaccinator at work

Mothers proudly showing their vaccination cards

SRSO/RSPN team at LSO Itehad

LSO Itehad President making her presentation

LSO Itehad meeting
After thanking LSO leaders and SRSO Jacobabad colleagues, the team left for Shikarpur around 4 pm. GRS has produced a visit report on the visit to Shikarpur which is reproduced below:

On July 07, 2015, Mr Khaleel Tetlay (Acting CEO/COO RSPN), Mr Muhammad Dittal Kalhoro (Acting CEO-SRSO) along with Dr Ghulam Rasool (Regional Manager-III) visited the LSO Network Khushal of Taulka Lakhi Ghulam Shah. The prime objective of the visit was:

- To know about the work, achievements and plans of LSO Mehran and LSO Network Khushal.
- To inauguration the new office of LSO Mehran, UC Birkhan.

Visit activity started with ribbon cutting and inauguration of the LSO Mehran Office by the Chairperson of LSO Mehran along with Mr Khaleel Tetlay. Ms Sanam (VO Moorani President) said that the LSO has 38 VOs as members from all over the UC. The LSO used to hold meetings at various places and the members VOs thought that the LSO must have its own office. This office act as a regular meeting place, and could also act as a community centre and display centre. The land was provided by an uncle of Ms Sanam. All other VOs shared in the cost of the office (total cost was about Rs 450,000). Now all VOs are happy that their LSO has an office.

**Meeting with VO and LSO members:**

As per plan the delegation reached at village near by 05:00 pm sharp. The programme began with recitation from the Holy Quran by Ms Khanzadi. Ms Bilqees (Chairman LSO Mehran, UC Birkhan) welcome the guests and made a detailed presentation on the LSO Network Khushal. The network has 11 member LSOs. Representatives of 10 LSOs were present. Over 31,000 households are represented in the network through being members of Community Organisations (nearly 85% of the Taluka’s rural households are represented in the network). The main objective of the network is to support the institutional strengthening of member LSOs, and to foster greater linkages with local stakeholders, including local government, political representatives, and NGOs.
After the presentation, Ms Sanam (President of VO Moorani) briefed the guests about other initiatives in the LSO. Ms Sanam in particular highlighted the handicrafts sector, where many community members have been trained and now supply ready-made clothes buyers in Karachi. The trained women have formed three business development groups (BDGs) in LSO area with proper technical support from SRSO. BDGs are now receiving orders from many buyers including Sartyoon Sang Market (SSM) and SABA Pakistan. Ms Sanam added that every member of BDG now earns about Rs 7-8,000 per month. At festival times, earnings double. Ms Sanam added that through SRSO, local organized communities received support in social mobilization, livestock, CIF, IGG, village infrastructure, trainings, etc. Once CO/VOs were organized, the members took initiatives in social sectors through the support of SRSO and local government and NGOs. Today many members access family planning services, all parents allow polio and measles vaccination, there is more focus on education and health and skill development process.

The chairperson of LSO Network Khushal shared the initiatives taken:
The Network, with the support of SRSO and other agencies, has implemented a number of projects in the programme area. The projects/initiatives deals by the LSO Network Khushal include:

1. LSO Awaz resolves the tribal clash between Shar & Khosa Community at UC Mughrani. That feud has taken the lives of 36 people on both sides. After intervention by the women members of the LSO the feud is successfully resolved and land of 125 (Jarebs) is distributed to 36 members whose male members died in conflict.

2. With support of LSO members, the school was evacuated from nomads at village Jhando Tanwari and now more than 100 students are enrolled in this school.

3. 12 closed schools are re-opened with the support of District Education (Supervisors) at Taluka Lakhi.

4. LSO Network also organized 07 Gender and Development (GAD) workshops at different union councils, where more than 750 women participated.

5. With support of NADRA & Takhleeq Foundation LSO Network organized CNIC Camp at UC Wazirabad.

6. LSO Network with support of CO, VO & LSO activity participates in polio eradication and EPI campaign within the Taluka.

7. Save the Children is in complete coordination with all LSOs through the LSO Network. They are initiated different activities on health hygiene, kitchen gardening, BISP, CPI schemes, etc.

8. HANDS in coordination with LSOs renovated 22 schools in the Taluka.

9. 1,500 calves (Heifers) were distributed through LSO Network for the poorest of the poor households.

10. LSO Network leaders have regularly met with and held coordination meetings with DC, ADC and Mukhtiarkas.

11. With support of Kainat Foundation, LSO Network organized 16 workshops on importance of education in different union councils.

12. On self-help basis, three LSOs have constructed their offices.

13. LSO Network also mobilizes youth members of society for employment and its encouragement has led 1800 youth to join the Pakistan Army.

15. After the recent floods LSOs distributed ration, NFIs and supported district government in rapid assessment in different UCs.

16. LSO with support of SRSO trained youth female in different trades for self-employment and sustainability.

17. Formed Business Development Groups (BDGs) and receive business orders from SABA Pakistan, AAHAN, Government of Sindh and Sartyoon Sang Market (SRSO).

18. Through productive linkages with Greenstar Social Marketing (GSM) LSO Network worked on family planning and birth spacing in all LSO network UCs. (Normal Delivery 1577, C-Section 302).

19. LSO Network with support of BBSYDP open 04 VTEC centres in different UCs where 175 females have been trained in different trades.

20. With support from Save the Children, LSO Network supported repair of seven BHUs in the Taluka.

After detail presentation, Mr Khaleel Tetlay thanked LSO members for their time and for their excellent presentation. While appreciating the wonderful work of LSOs and LSO Network, Mr Tetlay reminded the participants that the most important function of the LSO Network is to support the institutional development of LSO; the most important function of LSOs is to support the institutional development of VOs; and the most important function of VOs is to support the institutional development of COs. These CO/VO/LSOs are your own institutions. Hence the primary responsibility for their development lies with you. SRSO and RSPN can support your efforts but the responsibility clearly lies with you. Mr Tetlay’s comments in comments book are reproduced below:

*What a wonderful and exciting initiative by the LSOs to have their own Taluka level LSO Network. Very capable LSO leaders. Insha Allah they are found to do well. Network is requested to focus on the institutional development of members COs/VOs/LSOs. Best of luck for the future!*  
Khaleel Tetlay, COO/RSPN, July 7, 2015

Mr Muhammad Dittal Kalhoro (Acting CEO SRSO) said that he too is very pleased to see the work of the organized women. It really is amazing to see what they have achieved in a short span of few years. Mr Dittal said that all the achievements are due to your own agenda setting, your own participation, and your own deep engagement. Without this, locals or outsiders cannot do anything. Now all of you are on one platform, now you have opportunities to reach out to other stakeholders as well as to your own LSO, VOs and COs. Mr Dittal’s comments are reproduced below:

*Visit to the LSO Network of Taulka Lakhi & Inauguration of LSO Mehran UC Birkhan office on July 07, 2015.*

*I along with Acting CEO RSPN (Mr Khaleel Tetlay) visited and inaugurated this office. The office is made on self-help basis by LSO Mehran and represents an amazing achievement. The strength of LSO Network is exceptional and we are hopeful that in future these organised women will continue to manage their own development and take on bigger challenge.*  
Muhammad Dittal, Acting CEO/SRSO, July 7, 2015
Dr Ghulam Rasool Samejo (SRSO Regional Manager) thanked the LSO Mehran for hosting the visit and emphasized the importance of holding regular meetings at all levels. He said that the CO and VOs represent the foundation of the LSO Network and if this foundation is strong then the Network will be strong. Dr Samejo concluded by saying that the main role of all federated bodies is to support the member bodies and to foster linkages with all stakeholders for the benefit of the member households.

After this exciting visit to Lakhi Taluka Network of LSOs, the team left for Sukkur.
### Poverty Score Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC</th>
<th>Total HH</th>
<th>Organized HH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0—11</td>
<td>7,515</td>
<td>7,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12—18</td>
<td>7,910</td>
<td>7,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19—23</td>
<td>9,403</td>
<td>6,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24—100</td>
<td>12,797</td>
<td>10,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37,625</td>
<td>31,640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CIF

| CIF benefited HH | 12,333 |
| Total amount of CIF | 130,696,300 |
| CIF Revolve | 121,547,500 |
| % | 93 |

### IGG

| CIF benefited HH | 769 |
| Total amount of CIF | 8,236,000 |

### CPIs

| LCHS Total HH | 1,192 |
| Total Amount | 47,634,302 |
| DWSS total | 2038 |
| Total Amount | 24,480,442 |

### Linkages with other organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRSO</td>
<td>Integrated Development (CIF+IGG+Insurance+VTP+Social Mobilization etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpage International</td>
<td>To support old people and work in areas of ADA+Health+CRF+CBDRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kainat Foundation</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh Forum</td>
<td>Gender and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Children</td>
<td>CPI+Civic Education+Health and Nutrition +NRM etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Star</td>
<td>Family Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SABA Pakistan</td>
<td>Enterprise Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDS</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taqheek Foundation</td>
<td>Vote advocacy +CNIC formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alshafa Trust</td>
<td>Health (Eye)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Administration</td>
<td>DRR/Relief /Education/EPI etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Sindh</td>
<td>Integrated Development through SRSO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BDGs Business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of UC</th>
<th>Number of BDGs</th>
<th>Business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birkhan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>679,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rustam</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>397,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mughrani</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>58,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taib</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>292,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chak</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sehwani</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wazirabad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>298,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1,776,178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 3: Visit to Ghotki district: On Wednesday July 8, 2015, COO left SRSO Guest House at 830 am and headed towards Ghotki. At Ghotki SRSO office, COO met with the Regional Manager, District Manager and RSPN/SRSO Unicef Child Rights in Cotton Farming Areas (CRFA) Project Coordinator. COO thanked RM, DM and PC for arranging the field visit. COO mentioned that the recent visit by the Unicef Country Director to the project communities was very successful and that he wants to thank SRSO for this. Success leads to success and now the hopes for an extension and expansion of the project to the Khairpur district have increased. In addition, Unicef Punjab office (which is supporting a similar project in Bahawalpur and Rajanpur through RSPN/NRSP) has heard about the success of the Unicef Country Representative’s visit to Ghotki and now they are looking forward to arranging a similarly successful visit to Bahawalpur.

COO said that before departure for the field visit, he wants to discuss some important points about project management processes. Since 2010, RSPN and RSPs have invested heavily in improving their project management, implementation, monitoring, compliance and internal audit systems. These investments were made at the direction of respective Boards so that the brand and reputation of RSPs is not only maintained but also strengthened. In the case of the Unicef CRFA project with SRSO in Ghotki district, the recent internal audit and compliance reports have pointed out some weaknesses in record keeping. While SRSO has very quickly fixed these weaknesses, the point is that these weaknesses should not have arisen in the first place. This has also been pointed out by RSPN BOD Audit Committee. This shows the lack of paying attention to detail. COO reiterated the importance of ensuring that all paper work and record keeping is properly and timely completed. COO said that there is an old Korean saying: “What can be done today should be done today”. RM and DM agreed that there had been some lapses and now they will ensure that such issues do not arise again.

After leaving the district office, the RSPN/SRSO team moved to village Sufi Rafiq to meet with VO representatives. From the main road, a side brick lined road, surrounded by newly rising cotton fields, took the team to village Sufi Rafiq. There were various signs of Unicef interventions, including in the WASH sector under a project implemented by NRSP. Village lanes were generally clean and children were running around. Village lanes had small sign boards. The meeting was organised in the baithak (guest room) of a village notable and which had been converted into a Multi-Function Community Centre. About 10 female VO members welcomed the team. At the top end of the room were five desk top computers. Walls had charts hung on them including a photographs and short notes on several international and national heroes who are not included in the school curriculum, Neil Armstrong, Dr Akhter Hameed Khan, Moulana Edhie, Dr Einstein, Dr Abdus Salam, etc. All four walls were covered by posters highlighting various issues, e.g. health, education, cleanliness, etc., of interest to children and elders. All this had been done through the support of the CRFA project by SRSO.

The village is inhabited by many Punjabi Arain families. The VO members talked about their achievements and challenges. The women were particularly delighted by the setting up of MFCC and the computer centre. Before Ramazan, many youngsters including girls were coming to learn computer use. The classes will resume again after Ramazan. The women highlighted some efforts they have in the education sector, e.g. contacting Education Department for absent teachers, and closed schools nearby. The women mentioned that after the Unicef interventions
through NRSP and SRSO, the village now much cleaner and more organised. They are collaborating with the visiting polio teams and support them in the vaccination efforts so that no child is left out. With the support of CRFA project, they have linked up with the Health Department and now the EPI teams are visiting the village and vaccinating young children and pregnant women.

SRSO had not previously intervened in the village and as such there were no Community Organisations. Under CRFA project, a VO has been set up with 20 members representing all parts of the village (total of 80 households). Now efforts are underway to foster smaller COs in four parts of the village.

COO thanked the women for taking out the time to meet with the RSPN/SRSO team. COO said that recently the Unicef Country Representative had visit the village and that he had heard that she was most impressed by the work of the women of the village. Thereafter, COO thanked the women for their wonderful work and contributions. COO added that RSPs strongly believe that the rural people should have their own organisations and institutions at local, village, Union Council and higher levels. Through these people’s own institutions rural communities can do a great deal to improve their own lives. COO then shared some cases from recent visits to Jacobabad, Shikarpur and Kashmore Kandkot. COO said that he has seen organised rural women, through their own institutions, linking up with local government departments, local and international NGOs, local philanthropists, SRSO, and market players to improve their own lives through better management of their resources.

Towards the end of the meeting, VO President asked that since the COO travels to many parts of the country where RSPs work, what advice would he give to the women of village Sufi Rafiq? COO said that he is indeed very fortunate to be involved with RSPs since 1987, when he joined the first RSP of the country – the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme. Seeing the wonderful and result oriented work of AKRSP, COO had always hoped that such programmes would be initiated in other parts of the country and especially in his own district of Toba Tek Singh. From 1989, the replication of AKRSP started with the Sarhad RSP at Peshawar, then the National RSP at Islamabad, then Punjab RSP at Lahore, etc. In 2003, the Government of Sindh supported the setting up of the Sindh Rural Support Organisation as an independent organisation. In 2000, all the RSPs got together and set up the Rural Support Programmes Network. As being a staff member of RSPN, COO has the good fortune to travel to Gilgit, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Punjab, Kashmir and Sindh. During all visits to these areas, COO always tries to meet with CO/VO/LSOs. From all this experience few important lessons have been learnt, and Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan the founder of the RSPs movement in Pakistan, also always highlights these:

- The importance of identifying and having honest leadership at all levels,
- Holding regular meetings at time and place convenient to most members,
- Undertaking regular savings,
- Keeping all records and proceedings updated,
- Sharing financial record of savings and other transactions with members on a regular basis to ensure transparency,
• Preparing household level Micro Investment Plans and Village Development Plans with an initial focus on self-help initiatives, and
• Trying foster linkages with support organisations and other sources of support, including local government departments, NGOs, private sector and local philanthropists.

Essentially, the key lessons for success are for the members and their organisations to set their own agenda (be self-directed), ensure transparency (shafaafiyat) and accountability (jawaabgiri).

COO thanked the members and left the village to visit a safe play area (SPA) for young children set up under the CFRA project at another nearby village (Ghurio Mahar). SPA was next to the main road, and constructed on a piece of land donated by a local notable. SPA area was lightly fenced. There swings and slides, and one covered space with fixed concrete tables and seats. A farmer working in a nearby field came over. COO asked him about the use of SPA. The farmer replied that the children come to play in the late afternoons when the heat recedes a little bit. SPA was clean and tidy.
COO and SRSO team drove to village Mureed Kaladi to attend a meeting with LSO Biriri, UC Beriri. Meeting was held in large room donated by a village notable for setting up the Multi-Functional Community Centre under the Unicef CRFA project of RSPN/SRSO. Brief LSO profile is presented below:

Name of LSO: Berri  
Name of UC: Berri  
Name of Taluka: Ghotki  
Registration Date: 9th December-2013  
Registration Number: FDO/SWCDD/GHK/VA-89  
Bank Account No: 687999  
Branch Name: First Micro Finance Bank, Ghotki  
Saving: Rs 78,000  
Name of President of LSO: Ms Parveen  
Name of general secretary of LSO: Mai Shafia  
Total households in UC: 3,114  
Households organized: 2,978 (95.6%)  
Total VOs: 28  
Total COs: 106  
General Body Members: 28  
Executive Body members: 07  
Amount disbursed under CLF*: Rs. 0.6 million  
No: of beneficiaries: 31  
Recovery Rate: 100 %  

(*Community Livelihoods Fund)

LSO Achievements:

- Local Support Organization (LSO) Berri has played a key role in the implementation of the PPAF supported Livelihoods Enhancement Programme (LEP) project in entire Union Council, in which 260 assets were distributed among poor women of the area
- LSO has taken lead role under the Unicef funded CRFA project of RSPN/SRSO
- LSO conducted the meetings with ICI officials to introduce wanda product (high quality animal feed) in the area so that poor women can be familiarised with means to improve the feeding of their milk animals
The LSO officials distributed 230 wanda bags at free of cost among the poor beneficiaries.

Recently a convention of all COos and VOos of UC was called by LSO, where women presented their issue and talked about their solutions, LSO received mega media coverage on this initiation.

Under UnicefCRFA project, 13 schemes under Social Fund are initiated and monitored by LSO.

Ms Parveen is the President of the LSO. Ms Parveen said that the objectives of the CO/VO/LSO of UC Biriri are to organise the people and to foster unity amongst them so that they start to work together to take initiatives to improve their own lives.

With the support from Unicef, various activities have been implemented including setting up of safe play areas, small bridge construction, setting up of a school library, computer lab, improving village lanes, provision of school furniture, construction of a school boundary wall and provision of water supply to one school. Through self-help initiative LSO mobilised Rs 80,000 for the medical treatment of one CO member (Mai Manzooran). LSO also celebrated the International Women’s Day at a function where over 600 women participated. Upon asking, Ms Parveen said that CO/VO/LSO fully support the polio vaccination campaigns. In other health areas, like birth spacing, there is much more awareness. People are now organised and through this organisation they have gained much more confidence to raise their concerns and also to reach out to concerned stakeholders. Ms Parveen continued and said that while with Unicef support, some schools have seen improvements; LSO is still reaching out to the Education Department for further improvements.

COO appreciated the efforts of the LSO Biriri. He said that the RSPs strongly believe that once the rural poor organised and have their own institutions then they can undertake many initiatives to improve their own lives. There are many actions that the people can take on their own, e.g. maintaining cleanliness, running school enrolment campaigns, planting trees, undertaking savings, etc. As and when opportunities arise, SRSO will support the people’s organisations. Organised people also have more opportunities to link up with local government and other NGOs and philanthropists. COO pointed out that once the VO was organised in the village it approached a village notable and asked him to donate a large room for MFCC, which he kindly did. If an individual had approach the said gentleman chances are that he would have refused. Yet when the VO approached him he readily accepted as he knew that the room would be well used for the benefit of the entire village. Organisation is power, power to set own development agenda, to mobilise internal and external resources. However, ordinary members also have the responsibility to ensure that the people’s organisations are transparent and accountable.

COO thanked the LSO members for their warm welcome and for highlighting their achievements. He wished them all the best for the future. Then the RSPN/SRSP team left for Ghotki town and from there to Sukkur.

COO caught the evening flight to Karachi. After spending the night at Karachi, in the morning of July 9, 2015, COO was informed the morning flight has been postponed till 4 pm. COO opened his virtual office in the hotel room. COO was back in office on the morning of July 10, 2015.
Key takeaways: COO’s visit was very exciting and learning. SRSO provided an opportunity for meeting with organised communities (at the VO and LSO levels) in Kashmore Kandkot, Jacobabad and Ghotki districts. COO also met with project staff members implementing RSPN/SRSO projects. In Kashmore Kandkot, District Health Officer joined the field visit.

At the community meetings, COO highlighted the importance of people’s organisations to set their own development agenda, to be transparent and accountable. At the meetings with SRSO and project staff, COO highlighted the importance of ensuring that all contractual requirements are met from programming, monitoring, reporting and compliance perspectives. While it takes years of hard work and efforts to build a name, a small lapse can readily bring a bad name and ruin all the good work.

For sound project management, both RSPN and SRSO colleagues have to give full attention to timely completion of targets while ensuring that all processes are duly followed. Senior management must regularly follow up on project progress and monitoring. Issues identified in the monitoring report must be addressed quickly. Since several projects also involve local Government Departments project Focal Persons must play a more proactive role, as must the District Managers. Project staff need continues monitoring and support from senior SRSO colleagues. Sometimes focus shifts to larger projects. However, from individual donor’s perspective each project is very important. Same should be followed by RSPN and SRSO; all projects, irrespective of the amount of money, should be given due importance. SRSO’s own
Internal Audit Department should conduct internal audits of projects so that when the RSPN Internal Auditor arrives everything is in order.

During the next round of field visits, COO will pay more visits to COs who are the foundation of the social structures that the RSPs are now constructing across the country.

Finally, COO wants to thank Muhammad Dittal sahib (ACEO SRSO), Ghulam Rasool sahib (Regional Manager), Niaz sahib (Regional Manager), Manzoor Jalbani sahib (DM Jacobabad), Asad Sahib (DM Kashmore Kandkot), Imam Ali sahib (DM Ghotki) and Abdul Latif sahib (DM Shikarpur) for sparing valuable time to join the field visits and in sharing their experiences. Thank you SRSO!

Children playing in from of the Multi-Functional Community Centre, Goth Sufi Rafiq