



RSPN

RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES NETWORK

# Strategy

2015-2020

## VISION

Realising people's potential for economic and social empowerment

## MISSION

Strengthen RSPs to foster institutions of the people

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**RSPN**

*RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES NETWORK*

# Strategy

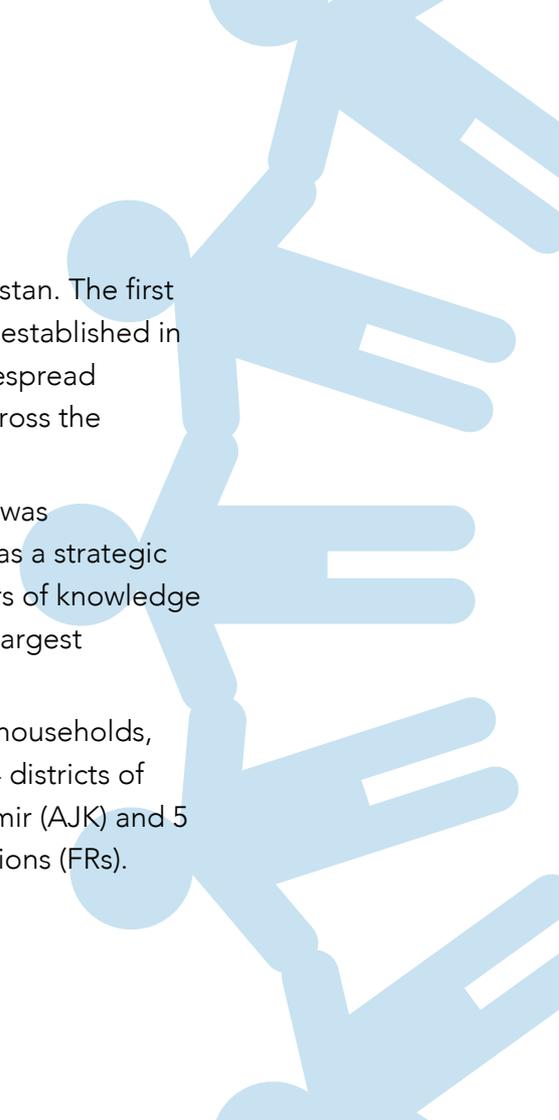
2015-2020

## *ABOUT THE RSPs NETWORK*

Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) are a national asset of Pakistan. The first RSP - the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) - was established in 1982 by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). Its success and widespread recognition led to the establishment of several other RSPs across the country.

In July 2000, the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) was established with the efforts of the RSPs. Today, RSPN serves as a strategic platform for 11 member RSPs, bringing together over 30 years of knowledge in Community-Driven Development (CDD). RSPN is now the largest development network of Pakistan.

Its outreach through the member RSPs is over 6 million rural households, representing a population of over 40 million in 125 out of 144 districts of Pakistan including Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and 5 Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Frontier Regions (FRs).



## THE RSPs APPROACH

RSPs build upon the conceptual framework developed by Dr Akhtar Hameed Khan in 1950s and 60s in the world famous Comilla Project, which was further developed and scaled up by AKRSP under Mr Shoaib Sultan Khan's 12 years of leadership. The centre-piece of the RSP approach, and which is its distinguish mark, the belief that since poverty is experienced at the household level, the poor need to organise themselves, begin capital formation, and improve their skills. RSPs provide social guidance as well as technical and financial assistance to the rural poor through three-tiered social mobilization approach to CDD.

### *RSPN's Vision: Realising people's potential for economic and social empowerment*

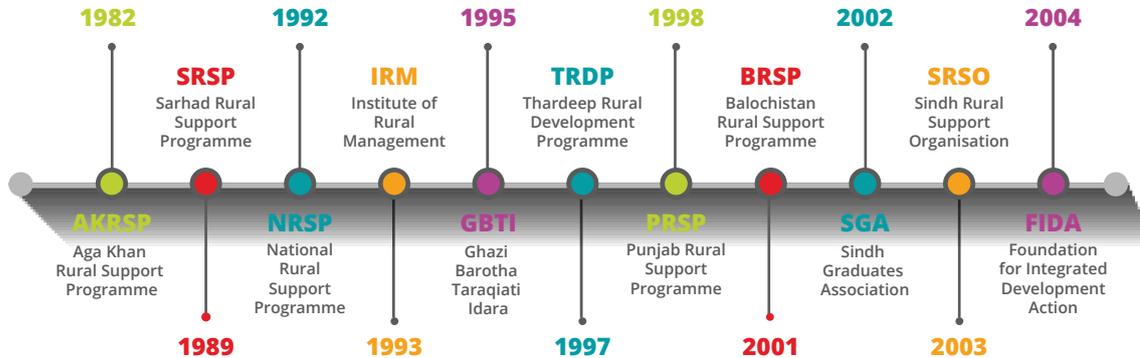
RSPN's vision represents the basic philosophy of RSPs' social mobilisation approach to CDD. RSPN's work therefore aligns itself with RSPs' work and centres on the belief that poor men and women have an innate potential to help themselves, that they can better manage their limited resources if they organise themselves into their own institutions. Peoples' own institutions serve as the primary partners in fulfilling the nation's development agenda by extending outreach to the household level across the country, for it is at the household level that poverty is experienced on a daily basis.

## *RSPN's Mission: Strengthen RSPs to foster institutions of the people*

RSPN's mission is to further facilitate, enable and provide technical support to member RSPs to foster sustainable institutions of the people. RSPN's mandate focuses on:

- 1 Ensuring that all RSPs follow the core social mobilisation approach
- 2 Improving coordination and communication between RSPs, and between the network and key development partners especially the government, donor organisations, and civil society
- 3 Providing technical assistance to RSPs
- 4 Piloting innovative concepts and projects for scale up by the RSPs
- 5 Mobilising resources for RSPs and providing implementation support when required

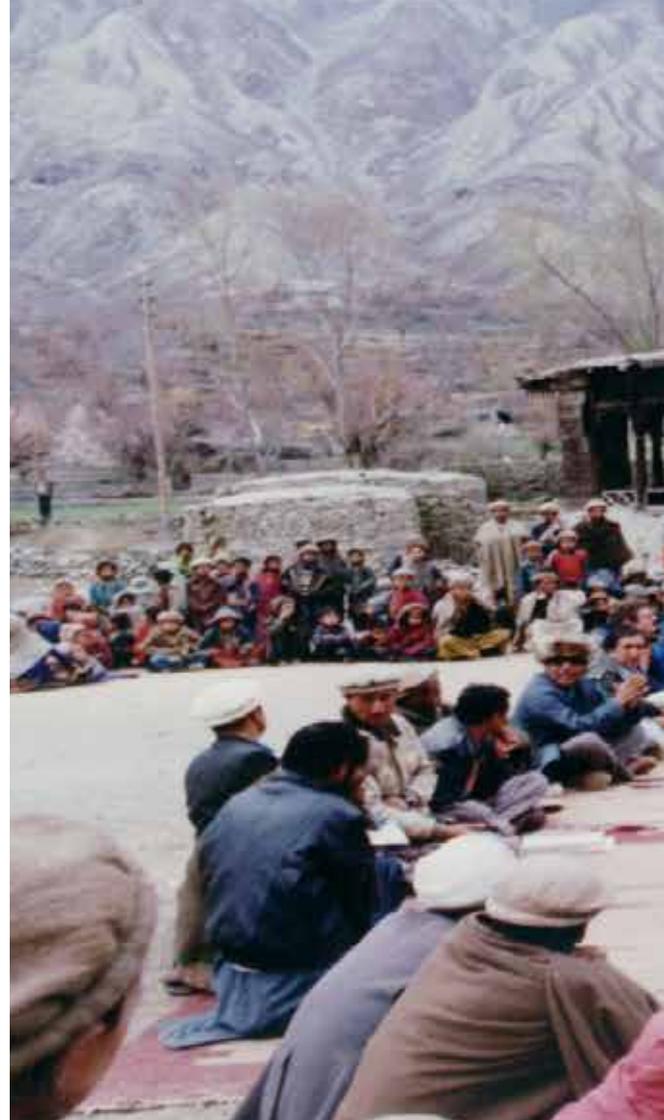
## RSPs Timeline: Year of commencement of RSPs

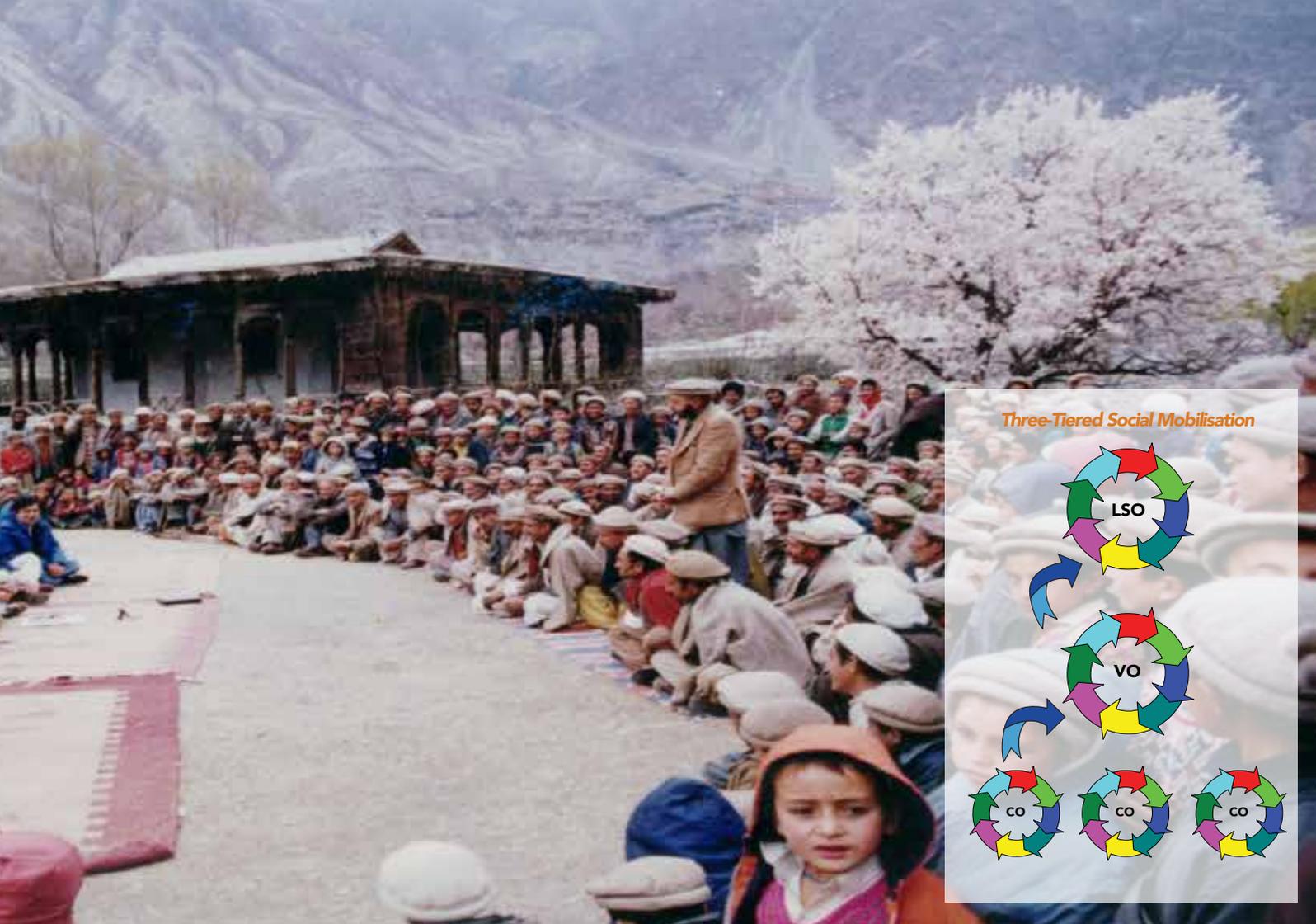


## SOCIAL MOBILISATION

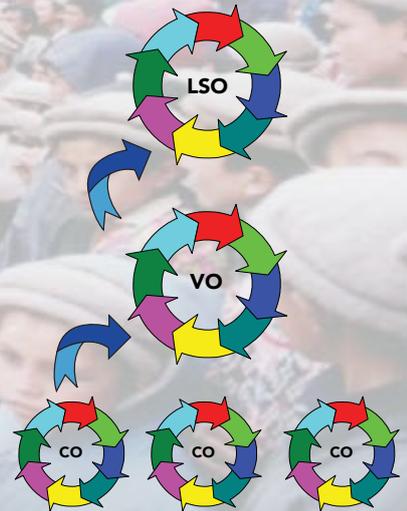
The centre-piece of the RSP approach is social mobilisation of the poor in order to enable them to participate directly in decisions that affect their lives and prospects. The concept is to build capacities of people specially focusing on poor men and women to organise, manage their own organisations, and increase the outreach of government and other development actors for effective supply and genuine demand.

RSPs provide social guidance as well as technical and financial assistance to the rural poor households based on a standard three-tiered social mobilisation approach to CDD. Community Organisations (COs) form the foundation of the peoples' own institutional network. Each CO is a neighbourhood level institution of 15 to 20 member households. COs are federated into Village Organisations (VOs) for planning and coordination at the village level. At the third tier, representatives from all VOs in a Union Council (UC) form a Local Support Organisation (LSO).





*Three-Tiered Social Mobilisation*

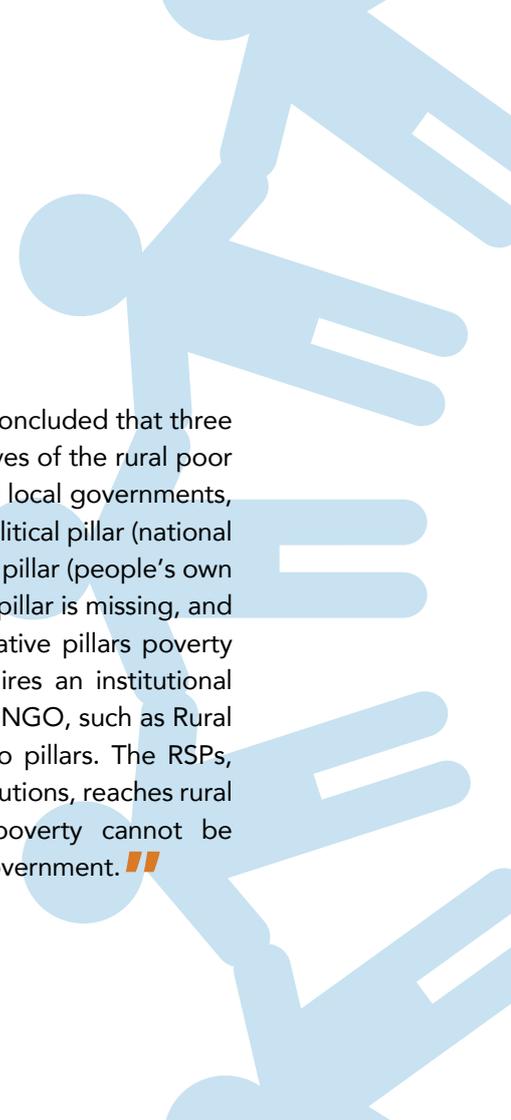




## *The Three Institutional Pillars*

“ After reviewing 200 years of global experiences, Dr Akhter Hameed Khan concluded that three institutional pillars are necessary for making transformative change in the lives of the rural poor households. These pillars are: i) Administrative pillar (central, provincial and local governments, judiciary, police and other institutions – from the president to patwari); ii) Political pillar (national and provincial assemblies, district & union councils); and iii) Socio-Economic pillar (people’s own institutions). Pakistan possesses the first two pillars but the socio-economic pillar is missing, and without fostering this pillar and linking it with the political and administrative pillars poverty cannot be sustainably reduced. To foster the socio-economic pillar requires an institutional mechanism which has the resources of the government and flexibility of an NGO, such as Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) and to establish the links with the other two pillars. The RSPs, through social mobilisation and organisation of the poor into their own institutions, reaches rural poor households. Without economic empowerment of households, poverty cannot be eliminated. The RSPs, thus complement and supplement the work of the government. ”

**- Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman RSPN**



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

RSPN's strategic objectives for the period 2015-2020 are based on the vision, mission, strengths, weaknesses, and the needs of its key stakeholders.

Over the next five years, RSPN will focus on:

1. Further promote and expand the community-driven development approach
2. Generate sound evidence and practical knowledge for improving development results
3. Improve RSPN's performance in delivering better results

## ***1. Further promote and expand the Community Driven Development approach***

The Seventh SAARC Summit held in 1993 at Dhaka welcomed the conceptual framework for poverty alleviation presented by the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA). The agenda called for financial and administrative support for the establishment of independent, non-governmental and national level support mechanisms to catalyse formation of people's organisations inclusive of poor men and women for poverty alleviation. The eighth MDG goal focused on a global partnership for development, and the SDGs further emphasise on partnerships for development.

RSPN's strategy in the next five years will focus on increased collaboration for CDD through effective networking between the RSPs and external stakeholders, regional cooperation between the governments, support organisations and community organisations to build partnership for scaling up of social mobilisation, raising awareness about the RSPs' approach to CDD and mobilising resources for RSPs.

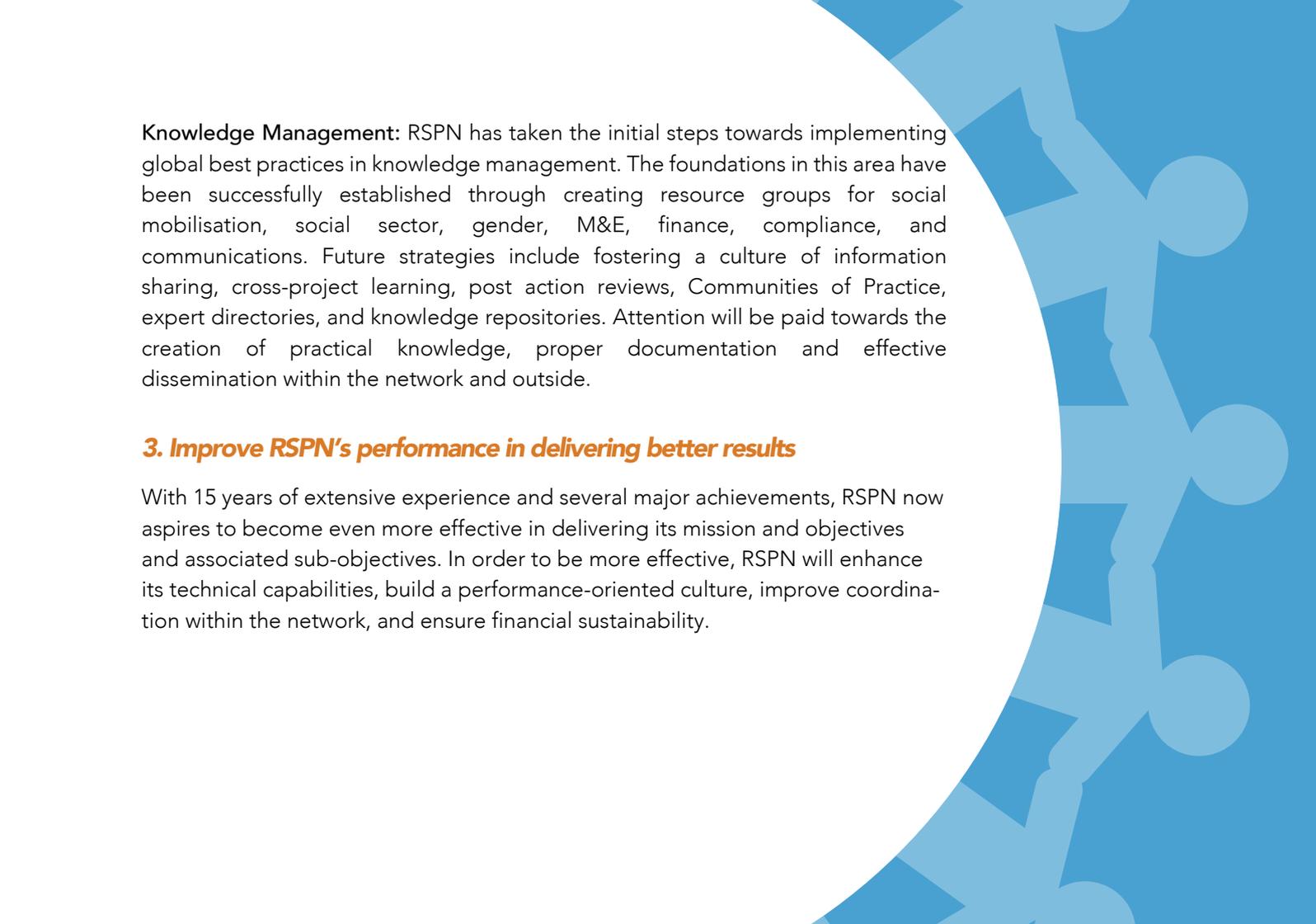
## ***2. Generate sound evidence and practical knowledge for improving development results***

Part of RSPN's core mandate is to provide technical assistance to RSPs through research, evaluation and knowledge management. The work in this area focuses on informing both policy as well as programming. Documentation of lessons learned through experience is a regular practice at RSPN. A knowledge management system has also been put in place which will be further improved in the future.

**Knowledge Products:** RSPN aims to produce at least 30 high quality knowledge products over the next five years including research reports, evaluation reports and reports produced by our knowledge management Communities of Practice or 'resource groups'.

**Monitoring & Evaluation:** At RSPN, M&E focuses on both learning and accountability. When RSPN is leading a project involving member RSPs or other organisations, both aspects are emphasised. In other instances, where RSPN is supporting its member RSPs, M&E focuses more on learning and improvement rather than accountability. RSPN recently developed a M&E policy manual and will further develop, launch and implement the Management Information System (MIS) for monitoring and project management.

**Research:** RSPN recognises the importance of collaborative research for development that goes beyond M&E and believes that the overall strategy be guided by research conducted in the areas — including but not limited to — livelihood, infrastructure, public services, gender, and access to capital. RSPN will continue to pursue research efforts in association with reputable national and international institutions on issues that are of priority to the RSPs and rural communities.



**Knowledge Management:** RSPN has taken the initial steps towards implementing global best practices in knowledge management. The foundations in this area have been successfully established through creating resource groups for social mobilisation, social sector, gender, M&E, finance, compliance, and communications. Future strategies include fostering a culture of information sharing, cross-project learning, post action reviews, Communities of Practice, expert directories, and knowledge repositories. Attention will be paid towards the creation of practical knowledge, proper documentation and effective dissemination within the network and outside.

### ***3. Improve RSPN's performance in delivering better results***

With 15 years of extensive experience and several major achievements, RSPN now aspires to become even more effective in delivering its mission and objectives and associated sub-objectives. In order to be more effective, RSPN will enhance its technical capabilities, build a performance-oriented culture, improve coordination within the network, and ensure financial sustainability.

## THEMATIC FOCUS

In terms of thematic priorities, RSPN's main focus remains on integrated rural development using the social mobilization approach to CDD. The RSPs emphasise on a broad range of thematic areas covering several aspects of development. As the network organisation, RSPN will contribute towards all those thematic areas in which RSPs are actively involved. Over the past few years, the following thematic areas emerged as the main focus areas:



### **Pro-poor economic empowerment**

For the rural poor, fighting extreme poverty remains the biggest challenge. In future, RSPN will continue to work on economic empowerment covering areas like poverty reduction, local economic development, construction of basic physical infrastructure, access to capital, skills enhancement, employment & income generation, agriculture, and livestock.



### **Governance and peace**

The absence of peace, justice, tolerance, and rule of law can drastically reverse any effort towards sustainable development. In countries like Pakistan, which is severely affected by fragility and conflict, the focus on governance carries immense importance. RSPN therefore gives high priority to improving local governance and promoting peace.



### **Social development and improved access to basic services**

RSPN aims to focus on the well-being of every individual in society so that they may reach their full potential and strongly believe that the success of society is linked to the well-being of each and every citizen. Social development issues that RSPN will continue to address include education, health, WASH, child protection, social inclusion, and support to minorities and marginalized groups.



### **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

This is one of the priority areas in which RSPN has remained active in the past and will continue to invest in the future. RSPN's work in this domain will be closely tied to other thematic areas and will be anchored in the basic principles of human rights.



### **Climate change adaptation and mitigation**

RSPN will work with the RSPs to enhance the capacity of communities to adapt to climate change as it is closely linked to social and economic development. RSPN's work in this area ranges from alternative & renewable energy initiatives to mitigation of risks associated with natural disasters.



### **Regional cooperation**

Central and South Asian countries share many similar issues and challenges of rural poverty, and can learn from each other particularly in the area of CDD. In the coming years, RSPN will focus on further strengthening partnerships for CDD especially between Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Tajikistan.

Over the coming five years, RSPN will work closely with RSPs and other stakeholders, including government, donors, and civil society, in order to meet its strategic objectives, realise its mission and move towards meeting its vision.





## Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) Programme

The most notable and tangible development in the next 5-6 years for RSPN is the European Union's funded Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme which is being implemented by NRSP, SRSO and TRDP in eight districts. RSPN's role is to ensure standardisation of the implementation mechanism, development of M&E framework that allows for common reporting, research and evidence generation, communication, policy advocacy and regional cooperation. Government of Sindh has announced that UCBPRP will be rolled out to another six districts with its own funding.

### Expected Results of SUCCESS

**770,000** rural households in  
approx.

**08** districts mobilised via their female members  
and capacitated through people's own  
institutions (CO/VO/LSOs) of which at least

**70%** will continue to function effectively at  
the end of the project.

**2,800** Infrastructure schemes completed, fully  
operated and maintained by the local  
communities

**108,000** community members  
benefit from vocational  
and technical skills training

**25%** of the poorest community  
members benefitting from  
micro health insurance

An average sustainable increase of  
targeted poor households' income by **30%**



Sindh Union Council & Com  
Strengthening Support (SU)

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یہ سید پرویز احمد خان





The Network of the Rural Support Programmes