



Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme



Meeting Minutes RSPN Board's BRACE Oversight Committee

15th March, 2019
Islamabad



IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS FOR THE BRACE's GRANT COMPONENT



PROGRAMME TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNER



Meeting Minutes
Third meeting of the RSPN Board's BRACE Oversight Committee

The meeting held on 15th March 2019 at the RSPN Office, IRM Complex, Islamabad to discuss the following agenda points;

- Update on the decisions of last meeting of the RSPN Board's BRACE Oversight Committee
- Progress Update of BRACE Programme, including financial updates
- Sharing of field visit learning by Programme Officer Gender and Development, RSPN
- Issues, challenges and way forward

Following were the participants of the meeting

1. Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman RSPN (Chair)
2. Mr. Nadir Gul Barech CEO BRSP (Member)
3. Dr. Rashid Bajwa, CEO NRSP (Member)
4. Mr. Ahmed Ullah, Programme Manager-BRACE RSPN Component (Member)
5. Mr. Fazalullah Qureshi (Member)
6. Mr. Khaleel Ahmed Tetlay, Chief Operating Officer (COO) RSPN
7. Dr. Shah Nawaz, Team Leader -BRACE BRSP Component
8. Agha Ali Javad, General Manager NRSP
9. Sadaf Dar, Programme Officer Gender and Development RSPN
10. BRACE Programme RSPN component team members
11. SUCCESS Programme RSPN, TRDO and SRSO components' team members

Proceedings:

Agenda Item 1: Update on the decisions of last meeting

Mr. Ahmed Ullah, Programme Manager BRACE RSPN component, started his presentation by giving a detailed update about the progress on decisions made during the last board oversight committee meeting. He said that the Specialist Social Mobilisation RSPN developed a rational for the re-organisation of all the existing COs, VO and LSOs in Kech. The dashboard is regularly updated and data on the dashboard is now gender disaggregated. A number of meetings were held with Secretary Social Welfare Department to address the CI registration issue. Bank account opening has been taken up with multiple banks. BRSP and NRSP will start sub-granting with already registered Community Institutions which will help achieve the target of sub-granting for the current year.

He said that coordination among partners are getting further improved. There has been great support from RSPN core team to BRACE team. Specialist Social Mobilisation, M&E Specialist and PO Gender and Development conducted field visits to Programme districts and provided support to the Programme. Regular meetings held among the three BRACE Programme Managers from RSPN, BRSP and NRSP. During visit of the teams to Quetta, meeting held to share updates, issues, challenges and devise way forward for addressing these challenges and issues. Summary of the decisions made in previous meeting and updates are given below in table 1.

Table 1

#	Decisions taken in previous meeting	Update as of 15th March 2019
1	Ensure participation of the Programme Managers in the Committee meeting	The committee decision is followed. Dr. Shahnawaz, Team Leader BRACE BRSP component participated in the meeting, while Agha Ali Javad, General Manager NRSP participated to represent Programme Manager BRACE NRSP component
2	Specialist Social Mobilisation RSPN will develop a rationale for the re-organisation of all the existing COs, VOs and LSOs in Kech.	Rationale developed by Specialist Social Mobilisation RSPN and is given below as annex – I.
3	BRSP and NRSP should expedite the process for addressing the delays occurred in year one of the Programme.	Delays occurred in year one are being addressed. There has been good progress against targets of households organised (52%), COs (70%), VOs (83%), LSOs (40%), MIPs (40%) as of March 2019.
4	BRACE Programme dashboards should be regularly updated to track progress and support in decisions	The dashboard is regularly updated and data on the dashboard is now gender disaggregated.
5	Process for CO/VO registration and bank accounts should be expedited so that field activities are not affected. Chairman of the Committee suggested to check if the CIs can be registered with the Cooperative Societies.	A number of meetings were held with Secretary Social Welfare Department to address the CI registration issue. Bank account opening has been taken up with multiple banks. There is some good progress regarding addressing this issue. BRSP and NRSP will start sub-granting to already registered CIs which will help achieve targets for the current year.
6	There is a need for improved coordination among BRACE partners. Ms. Shandana emphasised further support of RSPN Core team for BRACE Programme	Coordination among partners are getting further improved. There has been great support from RSPN core team to BRACE team. Specialist Social Mobilisation, M&E Specialist and PO Gender and Development conducted field visits to Programme district and provided support to the team.
7	Quarterly meeting of BRACE RSPs should be ensured	Regular meetings held among the three Programme Managers. During visit of the teams to Quetta, meeting held to share updates, issues, challenges and devise way forward for addressing these challenges and issues.

Agenda Item 2: Progress Update of BRACE Programme, Including Financial Updates

Mr. Ahmed Ullah then gave a detailed presentation on overall progress of BRACE for year one (July 2017 to February 2019) of the Programme against its targets. The overall progress shows that RSPN, BRSP and NRSP have expedited their activities and most of the targets are satisfactory. However, progress needs to be expedited for some of the targets, i.e. VDP development, CMST, CAT, MLST. PSC census and Socio-economic Survey completed, except in 5 UCs in Kech due to security issues in the UCs. Social Mobilisation activities are under process as per plan, capacity building activities for staff and Community Institutions are on track, CIs member have initiated development of MIPs; VOs have started development VDPs and the LSOs have started consolidation UCDCPs at UC level. Joint District Development Committees (JDDCs) and Tehsil level JDCs in Kech formed and are conducting regular meetings, identification of beneficiaries for Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills (ALNS), TVET, CIF and IGG are in process as per plan. establishment of Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills (ALNS) Centers are in process in target districts. IGG beneficiaries' validation process is under way; potential TVET Institutes identified. Community Bookkeepers have been identified for training on financial management and sub-granting will start by end of March 2019 with already registered CIs.

Committee members showed concerns over slow progress against targets for VDP development, CMST, CAT, MLST. It was explained that insurgencies and security situation in some of the districts, especially Kech hampered some of the Programme activities. in Kech, only 14 Programme UCs are not safe to work. Mr. Agha Javad explained that Mr. Arshad Rashid of EU has been informed about the situation. To attain the targets for field activities, NRSP has developed a strategy of advance achievement in the safe UC. The committee was informed that NRSP will attain Social Mobilisation targets in Kech by the end of June 2019. Similarly, 5 Union Councils in BRSP district have security problems. Dr. Shahnawaz informed that 110 UCs will have Social Mobilisation outreach that suffice; however, BRSP will plan an alternative approach to attain the targets in insecure UCs.

Mr. Nadir Gul mentioned that Mr. Martijin Boelen, Head of Finance, Contracts and Audit Section European Union appreciated the Programme progress during BRACE Progress Review meeting held on 12th March, 2019.

Presenting RSPN component of the Programme, Mr. Ahmed Ullah said that RSPN's core team including Specialist Social Mobilisation, Specialist M&E, and PO Gender and Development supported BRACE Programme by conducting field visits to Programme districts.

Methodology for Participatory Action Research studies, i.e. Dynamics of Household Poverty in Balochistan and Dynamics of Inclusive Development with focus on Women Empowerment and Gender Issues finalised and studies will commence in April 2019. BRACE video documentary, and BRACE Annual Newsletter are finalised. The committee was informed that originally, TA was tasked to develop Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GMS) for BRACE Programme and RSPN was tasked to train master trainers from BRSP, NRSP and Government of Balochistan (GoB) relevant departments on GMS. Since, TA is late on GMS, RSPN on the request of RSPs will develop Gender Sensitization and Mainstreaming Modules and tools and will train RSPs and GoB staff on modules and tools. Development of Gender Sensitization and Mainstreaming Modules and tools are in progress.

Agenda Item 3: Sharing of field visit learning by Programme Officer Gender and Development, RSPN

PO Gender and Development from RSPN shared her field visit experience and findings with the committee. She said that she visited two districts and attended women CO and VO meetings where the members shared their experience of getting organised in CIs. She mentioned that the members discussed that they faced hurdles initially by men of their families. However, resistance decreased once men were organised in CIs. She said that for almost all of the women it was their first time when they were asked about their challenges, issues and the importance of savings during Social Mobilisation process by BRSP. She observed women identifying drinking water issue as a priority issue. She observed no participation of women in LSO meetings; however, women responses regarding mobility was encouraging as she heard them mentioning, if they could go out for fetching water, why cannot they go out to attend LSO meetings?

The Chairman RSPN mentioned that once the CIF is sub-granted, the situation will change improved regarding women's participation in Social Mobilisation activities at LSO level. He emphasized that the Social Organisers at the field level need to be proactive in addressing Social Mobilisation issues related to women. The SOs and CRPs need to know the basic assumption of RSPs' approach, i.e., even the poorest of poor has the potential to improve their lives. The poor also know that some of their issues cannot be resolved individually and to solve these issues, they need to organise themselves in their own organisations. Individually, the households make Micro Investment Plans and to resolve common issue they develop Local Development Plans. Once this message is delivered to the communities well, they will mobilise themselves and improve their lives.

Agenda Item 4: Issues, challenges and way forward

1. BRACE Programme is facing delays in registering CIs with Social Welfare Department and bank accounts opening that has resulted in slowing down sub-granting of IGGs, CIF and CPIs. To address this issue, BRSP and NRSP will start sub-granting to already registered CIs which will help achieve Sub-granting targets for the current year. There is some good progress regarding addressing this issue. A number of meetings were held with Secretary Social Welfare Department GoB who developed the case and send to Chief Minister Balochistan for approval. Bank account opening has been taken up with multiple banks.
2. In Kech, more than 50% population from seven Rural UCs migrated to urban areas. Secretary Local Government and Rural Development Department recommended and NRSP has written a formal letter to EU to include the urban areas in the Programme. NRSP is awaiting EU's approval.
3. Internet connectivity is an issue in most of the target districts. To address this issue, staff of the field units visit district offices to upload data on weekly basis.
4. Mobility of women, availability of women for staffing and CRPs remains a challenge. The district teams have planned to involve school teachers and staff from government health department to address this issue.
5. There are delays in some of interdependent activities between TA and RSPs due to issues faced by the TA in obtaining work visa. EU has taken up the issue of work permit for TA with EAD and Government of Balochistan. RSPN has developed an alternative strategy to address issues related to interdependent activities in case the TA activities are further delayed.

6. Security Situation, especially in Kech hampered some of the activities. Support from CRPs and engagement of existing CIs help NRSP to conduct some of the Programme activities in insecure areas.

Key decisions

- 1) Chairman of the Committee emphasized that the process of CI registration should be expedited so that field activities are not affected.
- 2) Mr. Nadir Gul Barech will meet with the Secretary Social Welfare Department to address the CI registration issue.
- 3) Process for financial expenditure and sub-granting should be expedited. Sub-granting of and distribution of CIF in 65 villages, where accounts are open, will be completed by the end of June, 2019.
- 4) Gender Sensitisation and Mainstreaming training for master trainers of BRSP and NRSP should be undertaken as per plan and follow-up support should be provided to RSPs.
- 5) Recommendations on BRACE gender analysis report and review of the policies need to be incorporated in RSPs HR and Gender policies.
- 6) Progress needs to be expedited for some of the targets, i.e. VDP development, CMST, CAT, MLST.

Annex – I.

A rational for the re-organisation of all the existing COs, VOs and LSOs in Kech

Under BRACE programme, NRSP will organise 46,757 HHs which is the 70% of the total 66,795 HHs into 2,598 female COs, 918 VOs and 38 LSOs. Though the communities in the target 38 Union are already organised by NRSP years ago, but due to certain facts and findings on the ground, NRSP had planned to re-organise the existing COs, VOs and LSOs by either organizing new COs or facilitating them in becoming members of the existing functional COs. This process will include re-elections of existing COs, VOs and LSOs and also organisation of new COs, VOs and LSOs where these institutions do not exist in the villages/ Union Councils of the BRACE area in district Kech.

The rational for the re-organisation of all the existing COs, VOs and LSOs and formation of new ones where they do not exist are as follows:

1. The community institutions formed in previous phases of NRSP programme do not fulfil the current needs of BRACE in terms of poverty targeting, inclusion of women, institutional capacity and engagement in joint planning process in collaboration with local authorities.
2. Around 60% members are men in the old community institutions. Under BRACE programme, NRSP has planned to form women only community institutions. Therefore, a large majority of the existing members needed to be replaced by new members either from the same families or from previously uncovered families.
3. A large number of families had migrated from one area to another programme area or out of the programme area of BRACE due to insurgencies. In the cases of migration of communities from one area to another BRACE programme area, the community intuitions of both areas have to be re-organised, while in the cases of out migration of families from the BRACE programme area, the affected community intuitions needed to be organised by including new members.

4. A significant number of members of old community institutions have died or became sick or too old to perform their active role as members over the last 20 years. Therefore, new members needed to be nominated from the same families.