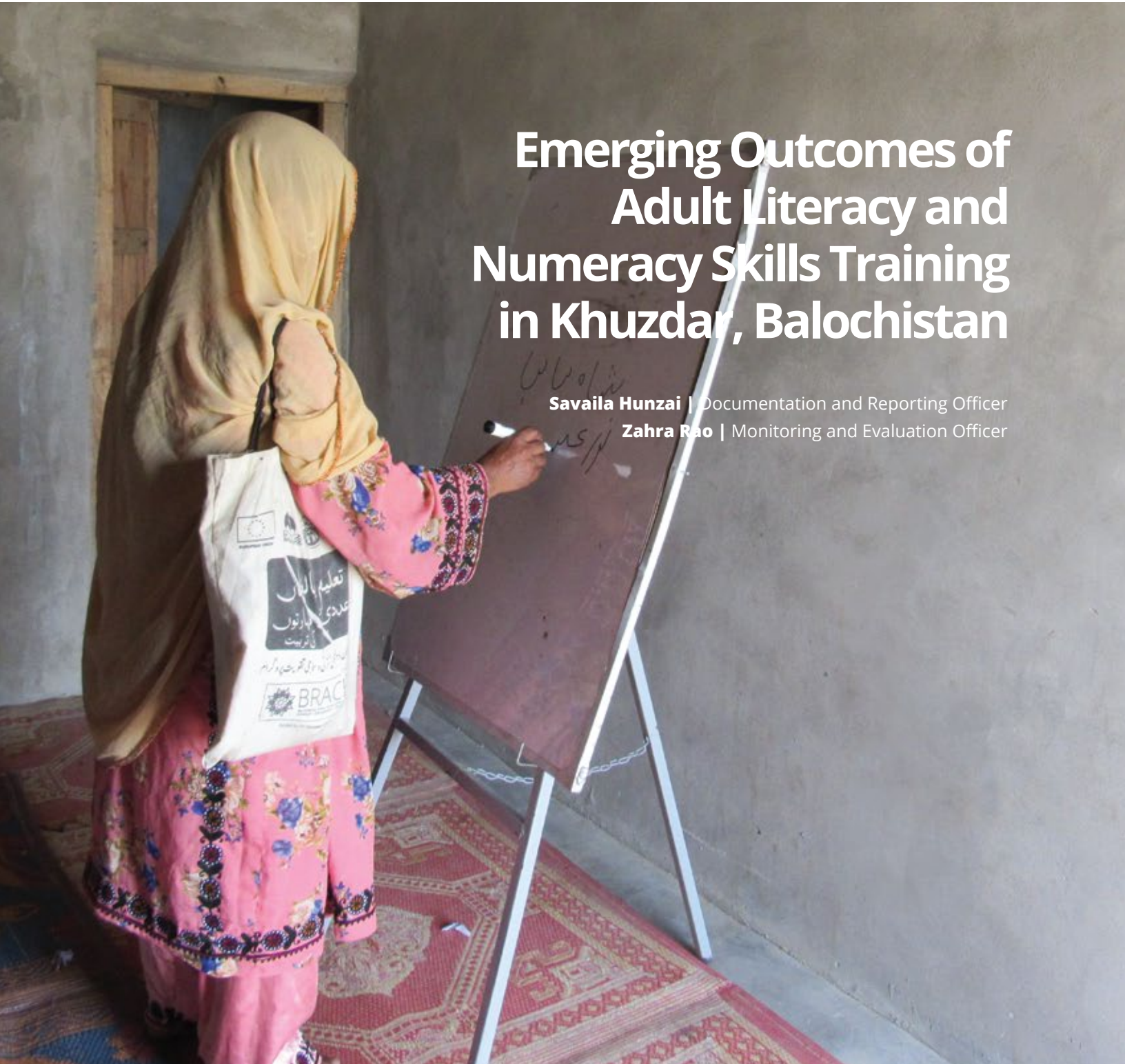


# Emerging Outcomes of Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills Training in Khuzdar, Balochistan

Savaila Hunzai | Documentation and Reporting Officer

Zahra Rao | Monitoring and Evaluation Officer



A study was conducted in district Khuzdar, Balochistan in March, 2020 with the objective of gauging the literacy and numeracy skills of rural women being trained at the ALNS centres established by BRACE Programme.

The literacy rate of rural Pakistan in 2018-19 was 51%, with less than 38% women being literate, according to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2017-2018. Total literacy rate of Balochistan is 40% with 56% male and 24% female literacy. District Khuzdar is ranked at number 122 out of the 141 ranked districts in Pakistan on the education score index by the District Education Rankings, published by Alif Ailaan in 2017.

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### **BRACE Programme and ALNS training**

European Union funded BRACE Programme is a five-year rural development programme initiated in June 30, 2017, which drew its inspiration from the Rural Support Programmes' (RSPs) approach to Community Driven Development (CDD) in its unique Social Mobilisation Strategy which aims to build people's institutions, Community Organisation (CO), Village Organisation (VO) and Local Support Organisation (LSO), for an interface with local authorities/governments. The Programme is executed by the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and its partner RSPs including the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) and the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) in collaboration with the Government of Balochistan. The BRACE Programme is being executed in nine districts, namely, Jhal Magsi, Kech, Khuzdar, Killa Abdullah, Loralai, Duki, Pishin, Washuk, and Zhob.

Under the BRACE Programme, the RSPs have collaborated with the Government of Balochistan to implement the ALNS training Programme through the Community Institutions (CIs) fostered under BRACE Programme. The course comprises English, Urdu, Math and Life Skill Education. The district RSP staff along with the LSOs, gauge the willingness and need of the ALNS centre in the

communities to set up the centre. After completing the six-month course, the learners are assessed. Upon securing passing marks in the assessment, they are given course completion certificates for literacy and numeracy level of a third grade student.

The integrated nature of BRACE Programme distinguishes it from other Adult education programmes as it is supported by and embedded in the three-tiered social mobilisation structure and other integrated interventions. All of the learners in ALNS centers are members of Community Institutions. After completion of ALNS course, the learners are engaged in different activities in their respective community institutions. These institutions provide them a platform to discuss their household level and also community level constraints that inhibit their socio-economic development. Women are participating in developing plans for their families' wellbeing and also for their settlement and village's development. At household level, deserving women are provided with Income Generating Grants, Community Investment Funds and/or Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET), to be utilised productively. Basic literacy and numeracy skill acquired are now utilised

during TVET and also help the use IGG and CIF efficiently. At the community level, women participate in local development plans such as the members of Village Organisations develop plans to resolve common issues of the village and these plans are consolidated in Union Council Development Plans which are consolidated into district development plans and strategy.

The overall purpose of the ALNS component under the BRACE Programme is to:

1. provide basic literacy and numeracy skills to women community members;
2. engage them in systematic and sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values;
3. help learners influence gender roles positively and facilitate them in mainstreaming women's role in social and economic empowerment in communities.

A total of **10,720 women learners** (8,440 BRSP and 2,280 NRSP) are expected to participate in the ALNS course during the Programme period in the nine districts of BRACE Programme. A total of **217 ALNS centres** have been set up so far; 51 centres out of the total of 217 have completed their six-month course. Out of 5,596 women learners (graduates and current learners), **1,223 have graduated from these 51 centres**. There are **4,373 learners enrolled in the ongoing cycle of ALNS**

**10,720** women are expected to participate in ALNS training

**51** Centres have completed their six-month course

**1,223** learners have graduated



intervention. 1,500 of these learners are enrolled in 50 centres in Kech with NRSP and are scheduled to complete their course by June 2020. The remaining 2,873 learners are enrolled in 116 ongoing centres in 8 districts with BRSP.

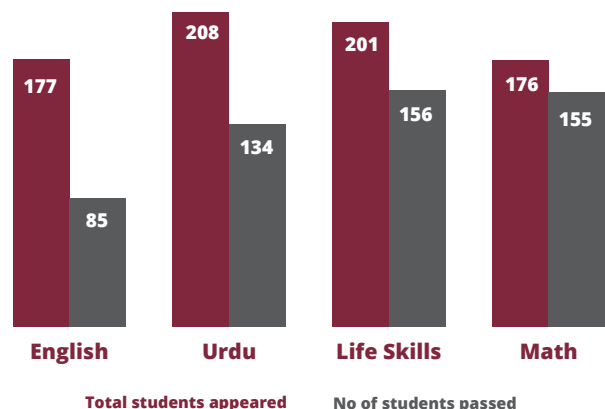
### Rationale of Study

A study of ALNS training will assess if and how it has been beneficial so far. It informs the Programme's implementing partners, stakeholders and other organisations doing similar work in rural communities, of successes and challenges of the ALNS training so they can take appropriate follow-up action.

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. Did the rural women of Khuzdar district benefit from the ALNS training?

### Assessment Result for Khuzdar District





2. How did the ALNS training contribute to empowering women? What were the social and economic outcomes of this training?

### Data Collection

The study team along with the district and head office team, purposively selected the villages Killi Yar Muhammad (in UC Abi Noghay), Shoalabad (in UC Baghbana 1) and Sardari Shar (in UC Tootak) for the study. They held focus group discussions with a total of 38 participants, interviewed 3 CRPs, 11 male relatives, 1 teacher and held in-depth interviews with 3 learners.

A theme list was developed by the study team to determine the direction and content of the interviews based on the study objectives, and shared with local staff to ensure that questions were appropriate for the context. For each theme, open ended questions were developed. In the case of the participants, the questions were designed to elicit narratives of experience in the training and those resulting from the training.

Relevant monitoring data collected regularly by BRSP as well as the assessment results was also reviewed.

BRSP is functional in a total of 39 UCs of Khuzdar. It aims to establish a total of 80 centres in Khuzdar, 2 in each UC. As of March 2020, there are 20 ongoing ALNS centres in the district while 9 centres have completed their six-month course.

The average age of the learners in Khuzdar overall



## 9 centres

have completed  
their course in **Khuzdar**

An average of

## 61% marks

obtained

is 31 and the average Poverty Scorecard (PSC) score is 20.1 ranging from 1 to 64. The 224 graduate learners from 9 centres obtained an average of 122 overall marks out of 200, which translates to 61%. Out of a total of 50 marks, they had an average score of 22 in English, 32.3 in Urdu, 35 in Life Skills and 40.8 in Math.

### Findings

A summary of the findings is given below:

1. **Economic Outcomes:** This intervention is proving to be a possible gateway to achieving economic outcomes. The learners, with an improved confidence in their abilities as well as their improved literacy qualification are looking forward to partaking in income generating activities, while challenging stigmas in the community around women's education. While one respondent is thinking of teaching in a nearby school, others are aiming to use their literacy to set up a stitching business.

*"...The teacher made me understand that if I do not know how to measure the size/ length of dress, how will I be able to make it?" Then I realised that education is necessary for stitching clothes as well. Now, I can read the numbers on the scale, and I can also write", learner Sughra said.*

- 2. Education and Learning:** Out of the three villages visited, the residents of one did not have a public school in their locality. The other two villages had gotten access to a public school only two to three years ago. 97% of the respondents have never attended school. This lack of access to formal education institutes has resulted in a large population of adult women and a growing population of young girls, who have not been able to get an education. The younger learners have a greater chance of reintegrating into mainstream education after receiving their grade three certification. The ALNS intervention by BRACE Programme has made education accessible to both groups, enhancing their future prospects.

*At the centre in Killi Yar Muhammad, a grandmother, mother and daughter trio has successfully completed the ALNS training. The 14-year-old daughter is grateful to have been introduced to this educational opportunity by her grandmother. She was able to get her certification for grade 3, has now enrolled in the public school in her locality, for grade 5.*

- 3. Health Outcomes:** The respondents defined a healthy woman as one who has no "worries" in her life, one who feels "free" and has a smiling face. They self-reported an improved mental wellbeing which contributed to a harmonious home life thanks to the hours of socialisation and mental stimulation they get at the ALNS centre. They also shared that walking to the centre allows them a chance to exercise. They are using their reading skills to make note of, expiry dates of medicines and vaccination dates; this leads to an overall improved health standard for the entire household.

*"When we come to the learning centre, we forget about our worries and issues. The learning centre has become a source of happiness for us. We laugh and feel free and open in this centre", said one of the participants.*

- 4. Social Outcomes:** The ALNS centres are acting as a powerful agents of socialisation. They have resulted in improved levels of trust within existing CIs and built new and reliable links with other groups of community. The learners rely on their teachers for direction and appreciate that they have someone from within their community for guidance. They have also established solidarity with fellow learners; the learners in Shoalabad held regular tea parties to celebrate their friendship and learning. 98% of the study participants were CI members; it was noticed that there was a two-way relationship between the learners and CIs. The learners who were also CI members reported that they are able to execute their duties for their respective CIs, in an improved manner. As of March 2020, 41 out of the 220 women, who had completed the course in nine centres of Khuzdar, were the leaders of CIs.

*"In the beginning I was reluctant, but as the teacher was just one of us, our neighbour, so there was no reason for me or my family to quit the class", said Faiz Bibi from Killi Yar Muhammad.*

*"I can read the agenda of the meeting, writing is still a problem. Most of us can write our names. I can write names of CO meeting participants and the amount they saved. I can talk to CO members more confidently in meetings as now we know each other well. And I know they trust me."- CO Manager, Saeeda*

- 5. Empowerment:** The participants of the study exhibit empowerment in terms of decision making, economic independence and self-efficacy. Anecdotes of being able to speak up in public show improved confidence while the respondents' experiences of convincing

their family members to allow them to join the ALNS Programme highlights their ability to influence household decisions. Furthermore, they now have access to other support systems e.g. the centre in Tootak has an ongoing, self-initiated savings programme which helps them save money for their own use.

*“Bajee (sister) Saeeda (the teacher) has given me the courage to talk in a gathering. I no longer want to be silent, I will either answer or say I don't know the answer,” said 20-year-old Zahida from Shoalabad.*

BRACE Programme's ALNS training has turned out to be beneficial for the immediate outcomes of the training are directly linked to each integrated intervention at household, settlement, village and UC level.

### Men's Perspective

Male relatives of learners from all three UCs were asked about their perspective on women from their households attending the ALNS training. 63% of the male relatives interviewed were less than 35-years old and all but two informants had mother-son relationship with the learners. All male respondents said they were happy to see their relatives attending the training, multiple stated that they would want the training period to be extended to a year. Respondents said they had noticed a positive behavioural change in terms of improved self-confidence, punctuality, better habits around healthcare, improved childcare, new money saving habits etc. The male relatives contributed to the learners' journey by making adjustments at home, dropping the learners to the

centre, contributing the guest room for the activities of the ALNS training etc. They said education was paramount to developing a community as well as for the province to progress.

*Relative of three learners, Dur Muhammad from Ai Noghay said, “If a mother is educated the whole family especially children will be educated.”*

### Recommendations and Way Forward

The study found that the learners would benefit from greater support from the male household members. To achieve this objective, it is important for the CIs to introduce gender sensitisation in their regular meetings. The women CI members should also visit the ALNS centres to improve linkages between the ALNS training and the CIs. It is also important for the RSP field staff to be cognizant of lessons learnt from each cycle of the ALNS training to continuously improve the intervention as they go. Lastly, it is recommended that the graduation of each batch be celebrated to encourage the learners to continue with life-long learning.

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#### Rural Support Programmes Network

IRM Complex, 3rd Floor. Plot# 7, Sunrise Avenue (Off Park Road), Near COMSATS University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Phone: +92-51-8491270-99, Fax: +92-51-8351791

[www.rspn.org](http://www.rspn.org)

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