Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme funded by the European Union completes its five years tenure in 2022 and is currently in its No-Cost Extension (NCE) Phase. In the inception phase, the Rural Support Programmes Network, (RSPN), the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), and the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) conducted a widespread Poverty Scorecard (PSC) census which helped with the identification of the potential beneficiaries according to their poverty status.

The journey through these five years is documented in the form of stories from the field after multiple activities. These human-interest stories have been titled "The Insights of BRACE" which reflects the efforts taken by the community members and the implementing teams in helping each other in tackling their household-level issues and taking a step toward reducing the poverty in each district under the BRACE Programme.

RSPN's BRACE documentation team worked with the respective RSP teams to reach out to the beneficiaries and obtain a story of the transformations BRACE Programme has facilitated. This series does not only focus on the financial empowerment of the community members but also reflects on the legal and economic empowerment in the target districts of the programme.
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Preface

With its vast geography, Balochistan has abundant mineral and energy resources, untapped human potential, and offers opportunities to change the existing situation. However, Balochistan’s population suffers disproportionately compared to the rest of the country. This is due to weak public policies, poor governance, the geopolitical situation, displacements due to security issues and a burdening influx of refugees, but also due to increased armed forces, security problems, and extreme poverty.

The Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme, funded by the European Union (EU), is a strategic government development initiative to alleviate rural poverty by building on community mobilisation and citizen empowerment. It is operating in ten districts of Balochistan. The Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) provide social, technical, and financial assistance to improve and expand income sources for targeted community households.

As the BRACE is focused on ten districts of Balochistan, namely: namely Chaman, Duki, Jhal Magsi, Kech, Kila Abdullah, Khuzdar, Loralai, Pishin, Washuq and Zhob, this book caters to the stories from Zhob. In collaboration with the BRSP, the beneficiaries interviewed under the BRACE programme in Zhob provided insight into how the idea of community-driven development is reflected and has benefited the people there.

The focus of BRACE is to enable poor rural women to reduce poverty at the household level through social organisations. This starts at a small level, organising Community Organisations (COs) among neighbouring households, and at the larger village level bringing them together into Village Organisations (VOs) to deal with village problems. VOs eventually gained enough momentum to establish Local Support Organisations (LSOs) at the Union Council level, some of which became a member of the Joint District Development Committee (JDDC) at the Tehsil
and District levels in which there is participation of the line departments and the district authorities which directly bring to the attention of local governments and negotiate with them. Ajmal Khan, a JDDC member shares, “Beforehand, it was difficult for the people to get their CNICs and other important documents registered nevertheless, during this platform NADRA provided us with a mobile van for five days and facilitated the people of the UC.”

Like this, the insights of the BRACE programme bring a series of stories of the beneficiaries as well as the implementation team with a focus on the challenges they face during the execution of BRACE.
## ZHOB 2017-22

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households with PSC survey completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Households Organized</td>
<td>21,136</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of COs formed</td>
<td>1,939</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Female COs</td>
<td>780</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of VOs formed</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Female VOs</td>
<td>103</td>
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<td>No. of LSOs formed</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of community members trained in CMST</td>
<td>2,800</td>
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<td>Women</td>
<td>956</td>
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<td>Number of Community members trained in LMST</td>
<td>458</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of community members trained as CRPs</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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1,074
Number of HHs Benefiting from Completed CPIs

7,516
Individual Beneficiaries of Completed CPIs

23.1 million (PKR)
Total amount of sub-grants for CPI with VO

16
Number of LSOs managing CIF

772
Number of HH benefiting from CIF for productive asset building and income generation

32 million (PKR)
Total amount of CIF with LSOs

15.44 million (PKR)
Total amount of CIF disbursed to poor households by VO/LSO (0-23)

188
Number of community members trained in TVET

499
No. of beneficiaries received assistive devices

346
Male

153
Women
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<td>Trainings</td>
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SOCIAL MOBILISATION
During a field visit to Union Council Appozai, District Zhob, we came across an admirable 25-year-old lady, Rafiqa. She is a member of Community Organistaion (CO) Gulbasta and works as a Community Resource Person (CRP) under the EU-funded BRACE Programme implemented by Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP).

She has completed her Faculty of Arts (FA) and pursues to get higher education as her priority. Being a woman it’s not easy to work with non-governmental organisations in conservative areas of Balochistan. However, as women leaders have proven themselves in every field of life, Rafiqa is one of those women who broke the patriarchal chains of slavery and oppression. She had resisted the socially constructed norms that jail women at home and clip their wings.

“Situation was too tough when I started to work as a CRP but gradually it came down when people realised the importance of change and witnessed the improvement.

It all started in 2020 as she spread awareness about health, education, unity, savings, etc during her CO and VO meetings. I never went out of my home for any task, but now I visit villages, go to offices, and talk to the officials as well. Today, I conduct meetings with the government line departments and ask for my rights and work for my people as much as I can.

As compared to before, my family is flexible about my work now and even supports me when seeing positive outcomes and respect
During a field visit to Union Council Appozai, District Zhob, we came across an admirable 25-year-old lady, Raifqa. She is a member of Community Organisation (CO) Gulbasta and works as a Community Resource Person (CRP) under the EU-funded BRACE Programme implemented by Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP).

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in the eyes of the communities I serve. Now, my only purpose is to fight poverty as it has made our lives miserable.

Rafiqa conducts community awareness sessions with women in her area and gives them knowledge on health and hygiene. Registration of the CNICs was another problem to be resolved in which she helped the people in getting registered by contacting the NADRA office and arranging the mobile van facility for the people of her area.

This explains more truly that more effort and no excuses can make anything possible, which Rafiqa’s story clearly reflects.

“In a land where young women don’t get many opportunities, Rafiqa stands to inspire young girls from the rural communities.”
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04

In a land where young women don't get many opportunities, Ra'qa stands to inspire young girls from the rural communities.
Abir Khan is the manager of Community Organisation (CO) Kasha in the village Kakar Khurasan for the last four years and is also a beneficiary of the Community Investment Fund (CIF). He is the only breadwinner for his family of eleven, including seven sons and two daughters. Despite all the difficulties to earn three times meals for the family, it was hard for him to bear the domestic expenses with an income of PRK 5,000 a month that too through a daily wage.

"Things were different before the formation of the Community Institutions (CIs) as everyone strived in isolation and each was busy in his/her own chaos. However, "after the Community Organisation (CO) Kasha came into existence, we tried to help each other in the village specially through the monthly Community Organisation (CO) savings and the regular meetings in which we come to know about the day-to-day issues of the members," Khan narrated.

Being a CO manager, it is his responsibility to manage the record, let members know about the benefits of savings, handle the LSO office, helping in appraising the community members for the Community Investment Fund (CIF) and Income Generating Grants (IGG), which has inspired the members to come forward and improve their living patterns.

Not only this, but he also works on improving the quality of life of the people and orienting them on the importance of health and hygiene, registration of the CNICs, birth, death, marriage certificates, plantation, etc.
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I am thankful to the European Union-funded BRACE Programme through which I received PKR 20,000 as a CIF and opened a tuck shop in my village. Today, I am earning PKR 10,000-12,000 which let me spend enough and save some for the rainy days.
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Malik Muhammad Raffey is the president of Village Organisation (VO) Butt Murgha and treasurer of the Local Support Organisation (LSO) Shaghalo Khurasan as well.

He has five daughters and three sons and has a small agricultural land in his village which is the only source of income for his family.

For the last five years, Raffey has been involved in these activities with the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP). Initially, it was not easy to mobilise people and form community organisations. Malik Raffey has been working for the last five years without any personal gain because this work is not about getting personal benefits rather it has always been about his passion for serving his people and raising their issues with the concerned authorities.

People might project an image or a notion of what they want in the future. Identifying areas in one's life for improvement allows one to visualise the goal and begin working toward it. Just like that, during the VO meeting for the Village Development Plan (VDP), the VO members identified their problems and prioritised the facility of getting a water tank storage. With many of the members voting in favour of this resolution, they succeeded in

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building a water storage tank for the village which has helped the people of the area. The total cost of the storage tank was PKR 1.1 million Rupees funded by the EU through the BRACE Programme, Raffey claimed.

It is all about the hard work of the VO members that they have ensured they got the most needed scheme approved in their village and have also maintained its quality.

Raffey believes that he has faith in his abilities to achieve what he dreamt of and a future where people will be aware of their rights.

“People of our area waited for years for the politicians to resolve this issue but finally with the formation of the VO, we got ourselves the required facility. VO Butt Murgha has not only brought this single facility, but many other benefits including Income Generating Grants (IGG), Community Investment Fund (CIF), and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).”
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llama Muhammad Naseem, 48, is an old resident and a religious scholar and imam of one of the mosques of Union Council Garda Babar, District Zhob. It's rarely seen that a religious imam is engaged in working for social projects as often, obstacles are generated by the religious scholars for those working with Non-Governmental Organisations. However, we see a different scenario here as Allama Muhammad Naseem has changed their perspective and always supported social activities which may benefit his community. There is always a story behind every change and so is with Naseem who shared how he got into this cause of serving society by mentioning how he along with his peers have bridged the gap and are now able to communicate much more effectively than ever before.

Local Support Organisation (LSO)

Allama Muhammad Naseem

Union Council Garda Babar

I was elected as Nazim in my Union Council in 2005 and that exposed me to the issues of our people. The main and very basic problems of the villages were that the people did not have CNICs, local certificates, marriage certificates, and birth and death certificates. All these seem very ingenious but for a person living in a rural community, it is not easy to visit every office and get registered under different platforms.

These issues are very common in rural communities but the efforts of people like Naseem, make it easy for them to accomplish. He connected to Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in 2007 as
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Five years ago, when EU-funded Programme BRACE was introduced, the people of Union Council Garda Babar entrusted Naseem with his leadership as honest and responsible. Nonetheless, his journey from a CO to the LSO did not prove to be a bed of roses for him. He faced many hurdles all his way toward empowering his rural community.

Naseem’s leadership qualities and courageous personality led him to the current position where he is heading sixty Community Organisations (COs) and fourteen Village Organisations (VOs) of which two VOs are all women members. He has achieved many goals including disbursement of the Income Generating Grants (IGG) and the Community Investment Funds (CIF) and getting his community members trained under the Technical and Vocational Educational Training (YVET). His commitment does not end here, as his journey toward empowerment and poverty reduction, continues.

People labelled me as an agent from foreign countries and an enemy of Islam. Things got worse when many of them left praying behind me in the mosque, which was disheartening yet never bothered me as I was affirmed that I am working for their betterment. I kept going, helped people, tried to make things easy for them as much as I could.
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LEADERSHIP
Community Skills Management Training (CMST) aims to improve the lives of people by teaching them the community management skills. The story of how Amir Khan got involved in the BRACE programme starts with a visit by Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) team to his village Hamza Khan, Union Council Gustoi Mandokhail.

He was elected as the president of the Community Organisation (CO) Hamza Khail and was trained in how a CO is managed through training, where he learned about health and hygiene, the importance of education, savings, regular meetings, and registration of the CNICs, etc.

“We were nervous about this training were nervous the first time as we did not know what kind of environment the BRSP team would be subjecting us to. However, we had been with the team before and therefore felt comfortable engaging in the new atmosphere,” shared the CO leaders.

I learned new topics which I was totally unaware of, and one of them was related to Gender. It was a completely new thing for me with many perspectives including Gender stereotyping, Gender-based violence, forced or early child marriages, etc. I had never had that much understanding of how ruthless these issues can be, but this training opened another door for me. Now, at least we take steps towards the better upbringing of our children and work on their equal rights.
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Nevertheless, most people in the rural areas are affected by very common diseases as they always avoid getting vaccinated which results in either deaths or disabilities of different kinds. With the help of the CMST, the CO leaders get trained to convince people through formed community institutions to take part in the vaccination campaigns and get as much benefit from those as they can.

“People of our areas are passionate about working for the betterment of their village, but they lack the understanding of doing it,” uttered Amir.

Amir Khan is not the only young leader who expanded his knowledge however, there are many other CO leaders as well who have outstanding leadership qualities, but they never have realised their abilities.
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Community Resource Persons (CRPs)

Rehmat Khan
Silyaza Takai, Zhob

Any stories are out of newspapers and media, but their impact can be seen on the ground even though we can claim it a silent revolution. We met Rehmat Khan at his village Silyaza Takai Zhob, a village that is covered by mulberry and olive trees and a flowing river on the front side.

Rehmat is 35 years old and a proud father to a son. His journey started in 2018 when his Village Organisation (VO) Sindhu was formed. He seemed like a suitable choice to the members of his VO to work as a Community Resource Person (CRP) for them as he had been in the development sector for eight years through different programmes that run in the areas and Rehmat was aware of the concepts.

He started his story, “I had remained an active member of our community before meeting the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) team and we had a youth committee at our village too.”

He had many responsibilities on his shoulders while performing his duty as a CRP, at the same time he became president of his Local Support Organisation (LSO) Silyaza Takai.

You cannot hope to develop a better world without first improving yourself. To that aim, every one of us must work for our own growth while also sharing a general responsibility for all mankind, with our specific obligation to assist those to whom we believe we may be the most beneficial.
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“Rehmat had always a sense of responsibility towards his duty, and he proved it. Everyone can see his efforts, his expertise in social mobilisation had changed the village,” said his fellow VO members.

“Silyaza Takai is the only union council in district Zhob where only 10-12 households are unorganised,” shared Rehmat.

He made his members aware of their rights and taught them to work to get those. During COVID-19, he was the only person who engaged with people and delivered Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) sessions including a session on the pandemic. Rural people often don't understand the usage of the linkages with the line departments and concerned persons but, Rehmat made it possible by burning midnight oil, and then they were able to open a new school funded by the Minter of their constituency.

Another major issue was the bridge crossing the flowing river in front of the village which is now going to be resolved soon as the Government has passed the bill and soon the construction of the bridge will begin. Well, all the credit goes to Rehmat who had known and aware his people how and where to use the platform of their LSO to get as many benefits as they could.

Rehmat khan attributes all this great improvement to the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) team and praises their work in his community. With his developing enthusiasm for the work, he sees himself as an advocate and a social activist, and he can't wait to see his aspirations come true.
Rehmat had always a sense of responsibility towards his duty, and he proved it. Everyone can see his efforts, his expertise in social mobilisation had changed the village,” said his fellow VO members.

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He made his members aware of their rights and taught them to work to get those. During COVID-19, he was the only person who engaged with people and delivered Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) sessions including a session on the pandemic. Rural people often don't understand the usage of the linkages with the line departments and concerned persons but, Rehmat made it possible by burning midnight oil, and then they were able to open a new school funded by the Minter of their constituency.

Another major issue was the bridge crossing the flowing river in front of the village which is now going to be resolved soon as the Government has passed the bill and soon the construction of the bridge will begin. Well, all the credit goes to Rehmat who had known and aware his people how and where to use the platform of their LSO to get as many benefits as they could.

Rehmat khan attributes all this great improvement to the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) team and praises their work in his community. With his developing enthusiasm for the work, he sees himself as an advocate and a social activist, and he can't wait to see his aspirations come true.
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
We meet many people around us who earn very little, and it is a wonder how they manage their expenses and go on with life in this materialistic world. To provide opportunities to improve family lives, the RSPs introduced Income Generating Grants (IGG) under the EU-funded BRACE Programme. It is a small grant which helps poor families to earn and fulfill their needs.

Sado Khan, 31, lives in the village of Syalza Takai in the Union Council Takai, District Zhob, Balochistan. He worked as a daily wage worker and had no livestock or land as a kind of property. He earned from hand to mouth for his family but had hopes for his children's bright future. While discussing, Sado shared that “A team from the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) visited our village and asked us to organise ourselves into Community Organisations (COs). We happily formed our organisation named Syalza Takai and continued to hold regular meetings. When the community members were being appraised for Income Generating Grant (IGG), our Local Support Organization (LSO) appraised me for PKR 55,000 against my Micro Investment Pan (MIP).”

BRACE provides significant assistance to poor families in the surrounding area. I invested the money received as an IGG in livestock as the most effective source of income generation in my village.
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Today, the number of his livestock has increased from four to eight. He has slaughtered many from it and even sold some of them when needed.

“I have seen a great difference in my life then and now and I have my own bunch of livestock today as my investment which gives an increasing profit every year. I sell milk and meat of my livestock when I need money the most.”

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I have seen a great difference in my life then and now and I have my own bunch of livestock today as my investment which gives an increasing profit every year. I sell milk and meat of my livestock when I need money the most.
Today when inflation is touching the skies, it is difficult for a common man to come up with the necessities. Gul Khan, a young entrepreneur living in the village Kakar Khurasan with his family is one of those who got struck due to this price hype. He has two children, a 3-year-old daughter, and a 2-year-old son. He had a small tuck shop built with mud and stones but due to his lesser earnings, he could not bring more items to sell. He used to sell limited stuff including Parchoon items but, he wanted to increase the quantity and variety of the items in his shop which he always failed to do. Later, he asked his friend to lend him some money, but the Union Council is counted among the deprived and backward ones, and even he could not help him. Things were going on the same way when he came across a team member from Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) in his town who introduced the BRACE programme to the people of the area. As his motivation was plain, he supported BRSP in mobilising the people of his union council and formed their first Community Organisation (CO) which is an organised group of twenty members. Gul Khan was represented by his community organisation as the most active member of the making chain. After the formation of the CO, and the Village Organisation (VO) Khusing, later, Gul Khan was elected president of the VO namely Khusing. Despite having some medical
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After the formation of the CO, and the Village Organisation (VO) Khusing, later, Gul Khan was elected president of the VO namely Khusing. Despite having some medical
issues, he worked hard for his town to raise every issue in his CO, VO, or LSO meetings.

To raise his finances, he applied and got himself appraised for the Community Institution Fund (CIF) through his LSO and received PKR 20,000.

“Before the EU-funded BRACE Programme, there were many people who had nothing but today their conditions are improved. I, used to earn PKR 12,000 - 13,000 per month however since I received CIF, I added enough items to my tuck shop which yields me PKR 30,000 a month. Today, I am saving up to PKR 15,000 from my earnings which are enough for me as I use that saving for my eyesight treatment and fulfilling other needs.”

Gul khan is now paying off the installments and has paid six of them with a monthly return being PKR 1,750.
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Traveling beside the river of Zhob is pleasing. Flowing water in the same direction where we were traveling Union Council Narezai had a lot of enjoyment, but things were differently perceived by villagers. As our car turned from the main road to the village, children were playing around the water tank built on the top of a small mountain.

Mehrullah, president of the Village Organisation (VO) Khozakzai, as he spoke to us, appreciated his community for their efforts. As they came to know about the Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI), they prioritised the drinking water scheme in the village as the people were being affected by the muddy drinking water running through the Zhob river.

As you have seen the water in the river was full of Mud, we were using that water for drinking before this scheme. Many people had suffered from kidney stones, and many went through dialysis which cost them a lot.

The villagers had been in a pathetic health situation due to the unhygienic drinking water, and one day they were introduced to the concept of CPI through Village Development Plan (VDP) with the support of Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) team.
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As you have seen the water in the river was full of mud, we were using that water for drinking before this scheme. Many people had suffered from kidney stones, and many went through dialysis which cost them a lot.
With this scheme, a total of 980 people are benefitting and are using safe drinking water in the village Khozakzai. A smile on the face of the children clarified how delighted they are by having clean water for their use.

Nevertheless, Mehrullah and the community members do not stop here and target improving the quality of education in their village as the next milestone to achieve.

After the VDP was finalised, the community members with the guidance of the BRSP team estimated the total cost of the scheme to be PKR 1,988,183. As this was a large amount, therefore the community members decided to contribute as per their capacity. The amount collected from their contribution was PKR 357,873 and the remaining share was provided through the European Union-funded BRACE Programme i.e., PKR 1,1630,310. It was difficult to believe for the community at first how someone can fund on such a large scale, but 1st May 2022 was the day when construction was started and everyone witnessed its completion.
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Ballochistan is a province with nearly 41% of households living below the poverty line. Poverty is the major reason for affecting people badly almost in every field of life. Many students have to quit their studies and start working at a younger age to help their parents, and Shahzad Khan is one of them.

He left his education in 2016 after completing his intermediate classes and started working on daily wages in his hometown Zhob to support his father who is a mechanic and due to the increasing inflation, he couldn't fulfill the expenses of a family of ten.

As he is a member of Community Organisation (CO) Gustoi Mandokhail, therefore he applied for this opportunity and got shortlisted. After getting selected for TVET from the LSO, he was sent to Rawalpindi for the said training. During this period, there were several pieces of training going on in the center however, Shahzad chose to get trained for solar panel installation for two months.
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Shahzad Khan

Gustoi Mandokhail

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I lost my work and with that, I lost all the hopes too. I wanted to learn a skill that becomes a source of good income for me. It all started when my cousin, a member of the Local Support Organisation (LSO), came to know about Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) under the EU-funded BRACE Programme that helped the underprivileged community members in learning something to provide for themselves.
“I had seen the emerging demand of solar panel installation in our area and that is why I preferred to get training into this as this would benefit me much as compared to the other skills,” said Shahzad.

After completing the training, now he works independently, and he installs solar panels in different villages and even repairs the technical faults in them. Today, he is earning PKR 20,000-25,000 per month and has got enrolled two of his sisters and six brothers in the school. He is paying their fees whereas his father’s income is spent on other family needs.

Shahzad encourages youth to be a part of such training and become self-determined to provide for their families. TVET has emerged to be effective in rural areas by helping people in learning new skills which may be beneficial for them in the long run.

Shahzad expressed his desire for pursuing higher studies and expressed.

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Over 99% of the world has eradicated Polio and Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two endemic countries left in the world. Several children have been affected by polio living with life-lasting disabilities. Shah Faisal is among those children who had lost his childhood happiness to this cruel disease.

Now he is 34 years old and lives in Syalza Takai, a Union Council of district Zhob. Faisal spent much of his life on bed in excruciating discomfort. Nonetheless, he became a reputable tailors in his village. He was always informed by his fellow men to stop dreaming, yet he never listened to them.

Although accepting his malady was difficult at first and he recalls his childhood.

“...

I used to watch playing kids in front of me even some of them making jokes of me. When I grew up, I faced many difficulties and none of my brothers were like me. I never been part of their friends’ circle and never had good friends.

Faisal is not the only person who is neglected but it has been common behavior of people toward those who are different from them. Then, Faisal decided to be independent so that he does not have to look for anyone and ask for anything. He learned to stitch clothes from a tailor in his neighborhood and started
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working with him as an assistant for a year and later purchased his own sewing machine and started working independently first from his home and now from his own small tailor shop.

“While working with him, I never imagined that one day I will have my own shop, but when there is will there's a way and I got a path towards my success,” Faisal expressed delightfully.

It has been nine years since he opened his shop, but his hard days never ended. He used to stitch clothes and then take them to Zhob Bazar to get buttonholes in the shirts because he did not have this facility in his village. As his village had a flowing river and he could not cross it when he used to make his way to the Bazar.

“I used to ask villagers when they went to Bazar to take me with them and some of them helped and others always refused. One day when I came to know about the distribution of the Auto-Rickshaws for Persons with Special Needs (PWSNs) under the EU-funded BRACE Programme, I got myself eligible to receive the Auto-Rikshaw through my LSO which has made my life much easier today,”

Today, he drives himself, visits Bazar, and gets his work done without depending on others.
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LEGAL EMPOWERMENT
Joint District Development Committee Meeting (JDDC)
Ajmal Khan, 27, is a father of five children from Killi Shagalo, District Zhob. He is the president of Local Support Organisation Shaghalo Khurasan, and a member of the Joint District Development Committee (JDDC) however, the journey toward the presidency wasn't easy for him as his Union Council is at the Pak-Afghanistan border. This is the reason people of this area are influenced by religious extremists. Ajmal Khan related to the Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme (BRDCEP) from the first day it was introduced. In 2019, his involvement became more important when he was elected as the president of his LSO. He has completed his Bachelor's in Arts from Balochistan University and preaches the importance of education to everyone in his Union Council.

During our visit, he shared the factors that drove him to this path of serving people without any personal gain, and expressed, “I had supported Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) team when they were conducting Poverty Score Card (PSC) Survey. I got a chance to collect the data and visited almost every household in my Union Council along with the BRSP team. I observed my UC specially my own village from a very closer look at how they are living their lives in poverty. I realised that I must do something for them and since that day, I decided to join this sector and serve my people.”

Ajmal Khan travels from Zhob city (where he resides) to his village which takes him two to three hours, but he never missed a single LSO or JDDC meeting. It shows how passionate and honest he is about his work.
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The main thing he got from the EU-funded BRACE Programme is learning about his surroundings and learning about the problems faced by his villagers.

He further added, “It was not an easy way to go from the registration to the functioning of the LSO office. We have changed our LSO office’s location three times just because of the resistance from specific people but we never gave up struggling.”

While sharing the importance of the JDDC meetings, Ajmal emitted that these meetings opened the doors for us to the line departments i.e., health, education, social welfare, livestock, forestry, and others. Now, we have contact numbers of all the focal persons of the line departments and we can easily meet them to get our matters undertaken.”
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JDDC is a platform that bridged the gap between our local community and the government. The Deputy Commissioner chairs the meeting which is more effective for us to put our problems in front of the head. Beforehand, it was difficult for the people to get their CNICs and other important documents registered nevertheless, during this platform NADRA provided us a mobile van for five days and facilitated the people of the UC.
PEOPLE BEHIND BRACE
Muhammad Yousuf, 35, basically belongs to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but his father shifted to Zhob years ago. He completed his school education at Zhob and then higher education at the University of Balochistan. Holding a master's degree in the field of sociology, he turned himself to studying society and working with and for the people. After joining the development sector, he received many pieces of training including Orientation Training Workshop, and Gender Training but things required many efforts in the field.

“It is difficult to build trust in communities, specially since my position required me to visit villages to offer training and mobilise people to leave their villages for further pieces of training or to get themselves registered for CNICs or open their bank accounts. However, I believed that through time, I would accomplish it,” shared Yousuf.

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visits them first faces their criticism even though things can get worse.

“The way we encountered things on the first day made it easy for me to gain their trust. Religious scholars did criticise us at first, but we asked them to give us time and with time they would get answers to their questions. It happened at the time of planning for the Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI) schemes that the same person who criticised us earlier was now at the front in leading the activity,” Yousuf recalled.

Muhammad Yousuf was never bothered by these mundane problems. The only thing that concerned him was whether the people would take his efforts seriously and work together to demolish poverty in their village. People of these areas have the potential of bringing change, however, they only need a push and someone who can polish their skills. Yousuf is one of those persons for the last nine years working in the development sector as a Social Organiser serving the people. He has spent nights of his life in the mountainous region of Balochistan with the rural people without having the necessities which he was used to.

"The only purpose is to resolve the issues of these people and make them aware of their rights to come out of poverty because this work is beyond the salary."
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“This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.”

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Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme

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