

**COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)**

**Period covered by this Communication on Engagement**

From: [January 1, 2018]

To: [December 31, 2019]

**Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent**

[The UN Global Compact]

[February 06, 2020]

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that Rural Support Programmes Network reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,



Shandana Khan  
Chief Executive Officer

**Rural Support Programmes Network**

## Part II. Description of Actions

RSPN's vision represents the basic philosophy of Rural Support Programmes' (RSPs) social mobilisation approach to community-driven development. 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 first. 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. Similarly, 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

The following RSPN's strategic objectives are based on the vision, theory of change, mission, strengths, weaknesses, and the requirements of its key stakeholders:

1. Further promote and expand the Community Driven Development (CDD) approach
  - a. Sub-objective 1 - Increase collaboration for CDD
  - b. Sub-objective 2: Raise awareness about the RSP approach towards CDD
  - c. Sub-objective 3: Mobilise resources for RSPs
2. Generate sound evidence and practical knowledge for improving development results
3. Improve RSPN's performance in delivering better results

### **RSPN's THEMATIC FOCUS**

In terms of thematic priorities, RSPN's main focus remains on integrated rural development using the social mobilisation approach to CDD. The RSPs emphasise on a broad range of thematic areas covering several aspects of development. As the network organisation, RSPN is contributing 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
- Governance and peace
- Social development and improved access to basic services
- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Regional cooperation



## Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

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

Sub-objective 1 - Increase collaboration for CDD: RSPN, as a strategic development partner of ten well-established and independent organisations have made several efforts from the reporting period for the fulfilment of its vision through regular networking and partnerships with national and regional players. RSPN facilitated in creation and strengthening of Local Support Organization (LSOs) at the UC level with the help of its partner RSPs. In this regard, overall 774 LSOs strengthened and out of these 370 LSOs are productively engaged in facilitating the government's development agenda during reporting period mainly in the sectors of disaster preparedness and management, delivering family planning services, mother and child health, community legal empowerment, youth development, and enhancing demand for access to quality education.

**Networking:** in order to increase collaboration both within the network and between the RSP network and key external stakeholders, RSPN has undertaken the following main activities during the reporting period. The aim of these networking efforts is to build new partnerships for expanding the RSPs' efforts of involving rural populations in the process of community-driven development:

- Active participation on key government, non-government and private sector forums;
- Regular meetings with decision-makers, policy-makers and development actors at the international, national and provincial levels;
- Exposure field visits of government officials to rural areas where RSPs are actively working with communities;
- Social and networking events to engage important stakeholders, Annual RSP strategy retreats and Annual national convention of LSOs;

**Regional cooperation:** RSPN given particular attention towards building partnerships for social mobilisation through CDD at the regional level between governments, support organisations and community institutions. In the first phase, RSPN particularly focused on increasing collaboration between Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and Tajikistan. In this regard, three exposure and learning visits were successfully organised by RSPN for Sindh RSP and Balochistan RSP teams, religious leaders and senior government officials to Tajikistan. The main aim of these learning visits were to share knowledge and information, and take joint initiatives on innovative development concepts based on the social mobilisation and institutional development approach to community-driven approach.

Sub-objective 2: Raise awareness about the RSP approach towards CDD: in order to expand the network of peoples' own institutions, build stronger partnerships, and mobilise resources, RSPN invested in raising awareness on CDD approaches and improving communications across the board during reporting period. To achieve this sub-objective, RSPN has produced 388 publications in the print and electronic media, and 16 awareness raising events across the country include 5 National and Provincial CDD conferences in collaboration with European Union (EU), 6 provincial and regional workshops on climate-change adaptation, national conferences on the community-based paralegals with support of UNDP, promoting quality education through Portents Ittehad in Pakistan by partnering DFID supported campaign, and 3 events of Global Hand-Washing, World Food Day and World Toilet Day celebrated under the nutrition sensitive component of the EU-funded Programme for Improved Nutrition in Sindh (PINS). Moreover, RSPN made 14 short-videos and documentaries highlighting development initiatives and case studies from across Pakistan, and successfully organised the 4 thematic awareness campaigns on National Climate Change Adaptation, National Green Day, undertaken a provincial campaign on family planning, and one campaign of Tree Plantation, Toilet Construction and Kitchen Gardening was also organised in target districts of Sindh.

Sub-objective 3: Mobilise resources for RSPs: resource mobilisation has been a key success area for RSPN in the past and RSPN is continuously making efforts to build upon previous successes. To achieve this sub-objective, RSPN performed regular analysis of government and donor priorities, RSP requirements and the needs of communities that are fighting poverty. Based on this analysis and available opportunities, RSPN has designed development projects and extend technical support to RSPs in planning. During the reporting period, RSPN has mobilised US\$ 33.17 million for development projects that directly being benefited to over 771,336 rural households with a major portion in rural Sindh followed by South Punjab region.

## **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 & 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 has produced significant results during the reporting period.

Knowledge Products: RSPN has produced high quality knowledge products including assessment and evaluation reports and reports produced by our knowledge management Communities of Practice or 'resource groups'. The knowledge products including publications and video documentaries produced during the reporting period were assessed by colleagues from all RSP Resource Group members. These assessments were carried out with an objective to get the feedback and improve RSPN's work in the light of feedback of partner RSPs. In a result, overall 84% (92% in 2017 and 67% in 2019) of the respondents to feedback surveys rate the knowledge products as "Highly Relevant & Useful".

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's M&E policy manual and Management Information System (MIS) are being used for tracking the progress 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. In this regard, RSPN is undertaking a comprehensive research experiment and a participatory action research in collaboration with University of Mannheim and Center for Evaluation & Development, Germany on community-driven development and household poverty dynamics under the EU-funded SUCCESS and BRACE programmes and 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 in future.

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, and communities of practice, expert directories and knowledge repositories. Attention is being paid towards the creation of practical knowledge, proper documentation and effective dissemination within the network and outside. RSPN with technical support of NRSP has launched a Mobile App "CommunityConnect" as first innovative pilot in 2017-18 was objectively focusing on the work of RSPs, programme implementation teams, community institutions, and development stakeholders working with communities. Moreover, RSPN also successfully piloted the rural entrepreneurship for women empowerment initiative of "Business in Box (BIB)" to sustain the family planning services in 2017-18 which is now scaled-up at national level. Under this approach, the identified Community Resource Persons (CRPs) were given basic orientation on social marketing and provided those BIB bags; containing contraceptives and other health related commodities. They conducted the household visits in their catchment areas and sold out the contraceptives and other health products to the MWRAs. Currently, this approach is adopted by the RSPs and CSOs and successfully demonstrating in the DFID-PSI funded Delivering Accelerated Family Planning in Pakistan (DAFPAK) and Saaf Sehatmand Services (Private) Ltd. that is a for-profit company with a shareholding by six entities, including RSPN.

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

With 20 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 continue to enhance its technical capabilities, build a performance-oriented culture, improve coordination within the network, and ensure financial sustainability. Several assessments by donor agencies and external audits were positive and found that the proportion of costs covered through income from endowment has an insignificant and little decreasing trend, however this proportion will be enhanced through development and tracking of annual work plan of the subsequent reporting year. Moreover, assessment of RSPN's performance by RSPs exercises are being carried out in each RSPN's BoD meeting and received positive feedback.