

## Speech at Launch of SUCCESS

**By: Shoaib Sultan Khan**

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Hon'ble Chief Minister  
His Excellency Ambassador of European Union  
Distinguished Guests

The Community Driven Development (CDD) phrase was coined by the World Bank but the concept had its roots in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Europe practised by Germany, France and Denmark and it was the mayor of a small principality in Germany named Raiffeissen, who described it in three development principles of Organisation, Capital Formation and Human Skills Upgradation. The concept was propagated in South Asia by Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan, when he initiated the Comilla Project, in the then East Pakistan now Bangladesh in 1959. I had the privilege of learning the concept from him and in 1982 applying it to Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Gilgit, Baltistan and Chitral.

On the request of Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Geneva, the Operations Evaluation Division (OED) of the World Bank agreed to assess AKRSP's impact every five years. In their first evaluation in 1987, the World Bank evaluators declared that the first four years of AKRSP are the missed four years of most Rural Development programmes, including Bank funded, because unlike AKRSP blue prints approach took precedence over a process approach followed by AKRSP. What struck the evaluators, as most impressive was the primacy of the village organisations in the eyes of the implementers of AKRSP. In their second evaluation, the World Bank concluded that in real terms the incomes of the million people residing in the programme area had more than doubled.

The OED of the World Bank does not evaluate programmes and projects where Bank financing is not involved. They accepted AFK's request to assess AKRSP because the concept AKRSP was implementing seemed to them novel and innovative. The two

evaluations of AKRSP convinced the Bank of the effectiveness of the approach in poverty reduction. The Vice President of the World Bank for South Asia Dr. Meiko Nishimuzi was so impressed after the visit to AKRSP that she initiated a programme for the Sector Managers of her Division called VIP, which stands for Village Immersion Programme and sent groups of Bank staff for a two weeks VIP in different parts of Pakistan and South Asia.

At her wish in 1998, I took her to Andhra Pradesh in India, where I was implementing the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP) funded by UNDP New York. After spending a few days in the villages of Andhra, she declared to Andhra State Government that she had seen “UNDP’s Miracle” achieved through SAPAP and offered Bank support, if the State would like to expand the programme Statewide. On State request, the World Bank stepped in 2000 in the shoes of SAPAP, when it phased out and set up a similar organisation called Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) and took the 100,000 households organised by SAPAP to 11 million households throughout the length and breadth of Andhra Pradesh. The latest evaluation done by the World Bank of SERP, acknowledged the influence of SAPAP and Pakistan’s Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) in the following words:

“The origins of Bank programmes lie in India’s women’s savings-and-loan association and the UNDP supported South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme which grew out of the 1993 Dhaka Declaration for the eradication of poverty. These approaches were also based on experience elsewhere in South Asia, including the Rural Support Programmes in Pakistan ...”

“In India, during the decade prior to appraisal, there was an increasing concern about the failure of antipoverty programs to reduce the number of rural poor. There were a number of problems with these programmes including poor targeting, weak management, lack of complementarities and wasteful subsidies.

“The components outlined in the programme were consistent with the objectives. Strengthening and building institutions for the poor including self-help groups and federated groups at the village and mandal level was needed to establish the platform for support. There were alternative options to women’s self-help groups, for example a program of conditional cash transfer or a stronger government safety net. However, neither would have enhanced women’s empowerment at scale with potential for sustainability. Financing was important but it was the connection of financing to women’s empowerment on a large scale that was central to the concept. The reason the project shifted away from CIGs (Common Interest Groups) was because of concerns

about sustainability when there was only a single enterprise binding the members in transactions related to that enterprise. While in some cases such groups may have been productive and sustainable, it was believed that they would not have offered the scale of voice and the webs of social and economic linkages and the wider purpose offered by women's SHGs."

The Minister of Rural Development, Government of India, Mr. Jairam Ramesh wrote in, 2012:

"Shoaib Khan pioneered the concept through his landmark Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Pakistan..... With the support of UNDP, he introduced the concept of poverty reduction through community organisation through South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP) in India and other South Asian countries. The pilot initiative of SAPAP led to a full-fledged programme based on the principle of development through community organisation under the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) in Andhra Pradesh with the support of World Bank. The project has seen the journey of over ten million organised households from despair to hope, from diffidence to confidence, from subjugation to empowerment in the last decade. The spirit of community empowerment has continued to thrive in India since then".

In Pakistan for the last 33 years, I am hoping for the Andhra miracle to happen in my country. The closest I came to achieving this dream was in 1992 when the World Bank Second Evaluation Report came out about AKRSP and I was also given the Magsaysay Award by the President of Philippines. I was summoned from Gilgit to Islamabad by the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and asked to formulate a countrywide AKRSP replication programme. With full support of the Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz, a ten billion rupee programme was approved and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) was set up with Rs. 500 million endowment with the assurance of six monthly instalments of the same amount for next ten years. Unfortunately the government changed and the dream remained unfulfilled.

Sporadic and ad hoc grants to RSPs continued and setting up of Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund in 2000 continued the expansion and replication of RSPs covering nearly 25% of rural households in the country but none of the RSPs got resources for a holistic programme like AKRSP or SERP in Andhra Pradesh.

However, in 2008 after a presentation before Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, resources for a holistic programme in two districts of Sindh Province, namely Shikarpur

and Kashmore-Kandhkot were sanctioned through Union Council based Poverty Reduction Programme (UCBPRP). On the basis of my experience in India, I submitted to the Chief Minister that UCBPRP will work with women only. It took him by surprise but he did allow me to go ahead.

UCBPRP was given resources for four years only and a maintenance grant, when suddenly out of blue, I got a call that the EU Development Counsellor wanted to see me. Mr. Brend de Groot asked me if I could arrange for him to meet the officials of the Sindh Government. We were lucky that even the Chief Minister agreed to see him. In the meeting, an offer was made by the Counsellor to replicate UCBPRP in eight more districts of Sindh only if the government wishes so and would consider covering the remaining districts in the Province under the ADP funding. The Chief Minister appreciated the offer and accepted it. The result is SUCCESS which is being launched this evening.

I am grateful to the Government of Sindh officials past and present, namely Fazlur Rahman, Ghulam Sarwar Khero, Nazar Hussain Mahar, Naheed Shah Durrani, Shereen Narejo, Malik Israr for their immense support to SRSO in bringing UCBPRP to the current level. In Additional Chief Secretary Ajaz Ali Khan, I see another strong supporter of the approach with his team of Chief Economist Dr. Marri and Programme Coordinator Dr. Meo. Above all it is the Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, who made it happen and I shall ever remain indebted to him. What he said on the floor of the Provincial Assembly about RSPs in 2014, no other politician in Pakistan has ever encouraged us in this way.

The EU team which is piloting the SUCCESS programme is a dream team in our eyes. RSPs could not have asked for a more supportive, understanding and committed persons. We are also greatly indebted to Economic Affairs Division for facilitating approval of SUCCESS.