

ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AZT	Anjuman Zanana Taleem
BNF	Balochistan NGO Federation
BoD	Board of Directors
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CB	Capacity Building
CBDO	Community-based development organization
CBO	Community-based organization
CCB	Community Citizen Board
CE	Chief Executive
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSN	Civil Society Network
DCO	District Coordinating Officer
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DPM	Development Planning and Management
DRC	Development Resource Center
DSL	Digital Subscribe Line
ECCD	Early Child Care and Development
EDO	Executive District Officer
ESRA	Education Sector Reforms Assistance
EU	European Union
FDO	Female development organization
FO	Female Organization
GG	Good Governance
GoP	Government of Pakistan
GRC	Gender Resource Center
HR	Human Resource
IT	Information Technology
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
LAN	Local Area Network
LBI	Local body institution
LIS	Learning Information System
MER	Monitoring, evaluation and reporting
MIS	Management Information System
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PDC	Participatory Development Coalition
PID	Projects Information Database
PNCC	Punjab NGO Coordination Council
PNF	Pakistan NGO Forum
PO	Partner Organization
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
RBA	Rights-based approach
RBM	Result-based Management
RNE	Royal Netherlands Embassy
RPAC	Regional Project Approval Committee
RSDP	Rural Social Development Programme
SECP	Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan

SMC	Senior Management Committee
SNF	Sindh NGO Federation.
SNI	Sarhad NGO Ittehad
SNL	Saving Newborn Lives
SPO	Strengthening Participatory Organization
SSF	Social Sector Fund
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TVO	Trust for Voluntary Organizations
UC	Union Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VEP	Village Education Programme
WDO	Women development organization
WO	Women organization

Message from the Chairperson

The year in review was set in the backdrop of major issues of poverty and increasing unemployment in the country. In a broader perspective, poverty and unemployment entail lack of income; low access to education, health facilities, development opportunities, and other services and infrastructure; and low people's participation in decision-making.

During this year the country strived to tackle these issues both at the micro and macro level. The government took some major steps not only to restore democracy in the country but also to address poverty alleviation issues. A Parliament was elected and local bodies strengthened to make service delivery for the poor more efficient. However, the elected parliament could not undertake the process of law-making effectively. Overall international conditions were also not conducive for attracting foreign investment. These two factors contributed highly in increasing the unemployment rate and poverty, due to which a large portion of the population continued to suffer from major deprivations.

Clearly, development in the social sector demands collaborative ventures between the private, public and NGO sectors. NGOs should realize that the issues of poverty and unemployment are basic for social development and need to be tackled first and foremost.

During the past year, SPO continued its efforts to bring about positive change in the life of disadvantaged groups across the country with which it works. There was a special focus on strengthening governance to support the government's devolution of power programme. Realizing that grassroots leadership and development initiatives will only be effective if the capacities of elected members are built, SPO started training local bodies' representatives using customized training modules. Similarly it undertook various programmes and projects for increasing women's participation in the process of development and for improving the quality of and access to education for children.

I am hopeful that in the coming year SPO's dedicated team will continue to steer and enhance its programme appropriately for building a more humane society.

Prof. Dr. Karamat Ali
Multan, January 2004

From the Chief Executive

Globally, the information age is unleashing power of the mind, enhancing productive capacity, allowing unprecedented access to knowledge, and offering enormous potential for public participation. In the midst of state and para-state institutions, the multinational and national corporate sector, and international aid and financial institutions, civil society organizations are progressively recognised as vociferous players in world economy, politics, sociology and natural environment. The liberal-democratic imagination of civil society has been handsomely challenged in the past couple of years by the Gramscian view, which defines civil society as a medium for alternative and independent political activity. The other side to these positive changes is as dark and dismal as ever. An unending cycle of wars, inequitable inter-state relations partly perpetuated by sophisticated trade regimes, and terrorism, mar human existence.

In the span of less than ten years since SPO became indigenised into a national civil society organization, Pakistan has come a long way. With an expanding road network, growing e-mail and Internet facilities, the availability of cellular phones and speedy courier services, a relatively free press, and some critical sense of history and politics evolving, there is ground to be optimistic. On the other hand, human development indicators are embarrassing, industrial development is limited and, even if there is a marginal increase in wealth through indirect investment, remittances or foreign aid, it is not translated into prosperity. With a population of 140 million, the Gross National Income per Capita is \$420. Poverty has increased as a result of structural adjustment supported by international financial institutions, population growth and inefficient macro-economy. Social development remains a challenge.

For SPO, development would mean equality among peoples and nations at the global level, equal opportunities and access to resources for all citizens and communities at the national level, and realisation of individual aspirations and hopes in the arena of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, within the broad collective parameters of social justice and public good. Development encompasses social and political empowerment of the individual and the marginalized.

However, SPO cannot change the entire world or the entire country. It can only contribute towards that change. The pertinent question then is to define the scope and extent to which SPO can play a part and do so effectively. If SPO is effective, it can contribute to change by conscious, purposive social action, provided with information, and supported by legitimacy. The key to our viability and success lies in building SPO from a dependent organization into an independent institution, having a focused programme, and promoting a goal-oriented and performance-based organizational culture. To this end, SPO systematically concentrated on streamlining governance and corporate affairs, with its Board of Directors meeting quarterly and the General Body meeting twice during the reporting period, while the organization carefully followed Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) regulations. SPO underwent a phased restructuring, through Institutional Development Plans I and II, enabling the management structure to correspond better

to changing programme needs. An internal auditor was appointed and more emphasis was laid on improving finance, human resource, administration and IT systems.

Making key decisions in the larger fora of the SPO team made the programme planning process more participatory. A consolidated programme proposal for the next phase was developed internally. SPO's primary training package, Development Planning and Management (DPM), underwent a major revision with gender and environment related training and financial management training being mainstreamed in the main body of the package. Work plans in the field were not only implemented but certain targets we had set for ourselves were surpassed. Other than running its core programme, SPO signed new partnerships on the basis of its capacity building experience. Most significant was the training of CBOs in the Tehsil Networks of Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO), which hail from almost all districts of Pakistan. During the reporting period, three residential training units were established in Hyderabad, Multan and Turbat.

What we intend to look at in coming years is responding to immediate challenges and availing new opportunities in such a way that long-term goals are met. We will capitalise on past experience and learn lessons from our successes and failures, never uprooting but looking ahead, exploring new methodologies and tools, and, last but not least, carefully and diligently resourcing the programme.

- Harris Khalique
Islamabad, January 2004

Executive Summary

In 2002–03, SPO’s Development Planning and Management programme continued in full force. Through this core capacity building programme, SPO mobilized and trained mostly rural community based organizations (CBOs) and women organizations (WOs) regarding development concepts, organizational management, situation analysis, and programme planning and implementation. These partner organizations hailed from all four provinces of Pakistan. In addition, 11 new clusters of CBOs and WOs entered SPO’s DPM partnership programme. As a part of their DPM training, 54 partner organizations undertook small-scale development projects with SPO’s *choti* funding. The projects concerned livestock, basic health, income generation, education, micro credit and vocational training.

The DPM training modules were revised to include sensitisation regarding political education, the rights-based approach, advocacy, financial management, gender and development, and the environment. Graphics were added to facilitate training of non-literate participants.

To improve the DPM programme’s effectiveness for women, SPO modified its Women’s Programme so that there is now more emphasis on initiating and sustaining female groups. The trained women development organizations demonstrated improving project management skills in their use of SPO funding, although they were not able to implement projects entirely without the assistance of CBOs. Some of them have reached a maturity level where they can access external resources to fund their projects, for instance through linkages with the Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO) and Canada Fund.

SPO also initiated a number of other capacity building programmes in collaboration with other national and international organizations. SPO and TVO agreed to collaborate in assisting one another’s partner organizations. During the reporting period, SPO and TVO initiated a project to train some 740 representatives of 370 *tehsil*-level partner organizations of TVO in organizational management.

In May 2003, SPO entered a partnership with Save the Children USA to support the latter’s Saving Newborn Lives (SNL) project. As part of this initiative, a Behaviour Change Communication Project will be implemented by selected NGOs in Sindh and NWFP to change negative practices and attitudes regarding reproductive health. SPO’s role is to build the capacity of these implementing NGOs. SPO conducted an orientation workshop in Sindh in June 2003.

SPO and its partner organizations remained very active in local governance related activities. Participatory development coalitions (PDCs)—networks of SPO partner organizations—participated vigorously in provincial as well as national forums arranged to finalize the design of the new local governance system. During the Local Bodies Elections in December 2002, members of SPO partner organizations not only supported the electoral process but also ensured active female participation. A wide-ranging consultation process was initiated by SPO across Pakistan, including a series of workshops attended by representatives of the government, NGOs, CBOs, and the communities. In all, 781 members of SPO partner organizations contested the elections and 536 got elected.

SPO also partnered with other organizations to strengthen local governance in Pakistan. The “Supporting Democratic Electoral Processes in Pakistan” Project was initiated by SPO in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Election Commission of Pakistan. The project’s objective was to increase voter turnout, especially women’s participation, in the Local Bodies Elections in 11 districts of Sindh and NWFP.

SPO also joined an international consortium led by Cowater International Inc. to implement the Devolution Support Project (DSP), funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), to support the government in promoting democratic local governance by introducing pragmatic and innovative ideas and tools to facilitate the change process and transition to a more accountable, transparent and democratic system of government.

In addition, SPO was selected to implement the ‘Getting the Balance Right’ project, funded by Department for International Development (DFID), UK, and aimed at linking women councillors with various financial and non-financial resources available at district level so that they can fully utilize

their 33-percent representation to promote women's development in the country.

SPO's Kech programme undertook several initiatives to support local governance. SPO's programme shift towards capacity building and governance in Kech was driven by the realization that, compared with non-formal education, political awareness for democratic change can be a more effective tool for development in Mekran. A Kech Governance and Development network was set up in 2002 to mobilize local communities. The network facilitated the establishment of numerous Community Citizen Boards (CCBs), 59 of which have been registered and provided technical assistance. Along with this members elected in Union Councils of Balicha and Malikabad were capacitated through especially developed training modules.

As is evident from the above, most SPO initiatives during the reporting period included a focus on increasing women's participation in development and governance. In addition, SPO established a Gender Resource Center in Turbat to provide books as well as audio-visual material on gender and development, governance, local bodies, women issues, and the environment to the local staff and stakeholders.

In 2002–03, the policies, procedures and application materials for utilizing SPO's Social Sector Fund were updated and simplified for use by SPO partner organizations. In all, 58 CBOs and 25 WDOs availed the fund to implement projects pertaining to agriculture and livestock, basic health, income generation, education, infrastructure development, irrigation, micro credit, and sanitation.

During the reporting period, SPO launched its civil society networks programme under which existing PDCs are being transformed and new networks are being established to play more focused and effective roles. These networks will primarily be engaged in advocacy concerning selected development themes. Each PDC was guided through a vision exercise to identify core issues in its district and select the area in which the PDC will conduct research studies, advocacy, and information dissemination. Strategic planning workshops and capacity building programmes were conducted concerning advocacy, rights-based approaches, and political participation for good governance. SPO is also providing Rs.3,000 per month to each PDC as administrative support.

Strengthening PDCs has had many positive results. During the reporting period, PDCs worked actively to get their member organizations registered. They updated member organizations on current development issues; disseminated information and organized dialogues on gender equity, human rights and legal rights; and initiated rights-based advocacy. Their most prominent impact was felt in the events surrounding local elections in the country: PDCs participated vigorously in provincial and national dialogues to assist the government in finalizing the Devolution of Power Plan, and mobilized communities to increase women's participation in elections.

During the reporting period, SPO worked on four programmes related to child welfare and female education. These include:

- The Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) project being implemented in NWFP, in collaboration with UNICEF, to enhance ECCD policy formulation and associated planning in the province;
- The Ammal Project, a joint venture of the Government of NWFP, DFID and SPO, aimed at increasing girls' access to and attendance at primary schools in NWFP;
- Tawana Pakistan, a school nutrition project for 5- to 12-year-old girls being implemented by SPO in three districts of NWFP to improve the nutrition status, enrolment and attendance of the girls in primary schools with sustainable community participation; and
- The Village Education Programme, initiated in 1993 to motivate, mobilize and offer non-formal education to women in the Mekran Division of Balochistan. Through this programme, SPO has increased women's access to education and employment, enhanced their functional skills, increased awareness on women's issues, mobilized women for joint action, and helped change attitudes towards women in Turbat. During the reporting period, the women groups formed during VEP were further strengthened with DPM training.

SPO's new communications strategy began unfolding during the reporting period. Key publications that were prepared and disseminated included 'To Make a Stone a Flower', a collection of case studies depicting the impact of SPO's various interventions; four discussion papers authored by eminent thinkers and SPO staff under SPO's new 'Understanding Pakistan' series; and three issues of 'Shirkati Taraqi', SPO's insightful quarterly newsletter. Another key output was a documentary film, 'Earth Stories', concerning the efforts of SPO's partner organizations.

Important events arranged by SPO to stimulate dialogue on development issues included an Omar Asghar Khan Memorial Lecture, where Dr. Tariq Rehman, a noted linguist and scholar, spoke about 'Education, Violence and Development'; a seminar entitled 'Give Peace a Chance', which helped in increasing knowledge and creating awareness regarding international responses to the ongoing USA-led war in Iraq; a forum to pay tribute to Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah as a role model for Pakistani women; and a Community Institutions Convention, attended by more than 500 participants, to enable social welfare organizations and other development stakeholders to share their experiences.

Continuing the process initiated in the previous reporting year, extensive modifications were made in SPO's programmes and structure. The organization's Board of Directors, General Body, Advisory Council, Senior Management Committee and staff held several meetings to steer this process. SPO's donors and their monitors also participated.

During the reporting year, SPO operationalised its reporting, planning and monitoring systems. In August 2002, a separate Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (MER) unit was set up to intensify and streamline MER activities within the organization. The Learning Information System (LIS), SPO's key database for monitoring information, was upgraded and web-enabled. SPO also trained its regional staff in monitoring and evaluation to strengthen decentralization of operations. Decentralization of SPO's regional Centers has now been fully realized.

Based on the new design for SPO's future programme, a consolidated proposal was produced and disseminated to current and potential donors. At the same time, SPO collaborated with different development stakeholders on a number of short-term programmes and projects, both to bring about the envisaged shift in its current programmes, and to mobilize resources for the organization.

SPO also applied to CIDA and the European Union for a no-cost extension of its programme until 2004. In two other initiatives to increase programme resources, SPO applied for tax exemption to the Pakistan Commission of Income Tax and established Training Sections at four of its regional offices so that trainings could be conducted in-house. To ensure internal accountability and make management and financial procedures more efficient and transparent, an internal auditor was recruited.

During the review period, specific development needs of the staff were identified and prioritised through a formal assessment. Trainers were trained to deliver the revised DPM module. Exposure visits were undertaken by six staff members to Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka and four staff members to Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Bangladesh. A one-day orientation workshop on Result-Based Management (RBM) was conducted at each regional office to enable thorough monitoring. In addition, new staff underwent different trainings and exchange visits within and outside SPO to gain skills relevant to their positions.

SPO's Board of Directors underwent a critical self-assessment exercise in February 2003, a unique initiative for a non-profit Board in Pakistan. The one-day workshop was conducted by Mr. Mohammed Rafiq, a General Body Member of SPO and Country Representative of IUCN Pakistan.

About SPO

The task of poverty alleviation in Pakistan cannot be accomplished through any single window; it is a mammoth, collective challenge in which the government, the corporate sector and civil society have equal roles to play. In 1987, collaboration between the Government of Pakistan and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) resulted in the formation of a Pak-Canada Small Projects Office. In its pursuit to relieve the pressure that poverty imposes on the marginalized sections of society, this organization started extending small-scale funding for community projects. However, it soon realized that lack of skills and capacity to manage could make the projects unsuccessful.

By that time, having worked with small community-based organizations for more than four years, CIDA wished to continue its commitment to enhance self-reliance in Pakistan. For this purpose, it decided to convert the Small Projects Office into a wholly indigenous and completely Pakistani organization. To undertake this task, Ralph McKim, who had most ably led and managed the Small Projects Office, helped CIDA and the Government of Pakistan identify three eminent personalities who possessed deep insight into the development process of Pakistan and could provide visionary leadership to the organization during its transition. Javed Jabbar, Ferida Sher and Tariq Banuri became the co-founding members of the new entity, which came to be known as Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) in 1994. With this transformation, SPO shifted its approach towards capacity building to prepare the poor to receive funds and utilize them properly.

Good Governance

The crisis of development in Pakistan is in reality the crisis of governance. Good Governance is essentially about socioeconomic systems that ensure equitable distribution of growth benefits, and legal and political systems that ensure individual freedom, fundamental rights, and civil liberties. Unfortunately, Pakistan lacks both: there are neither socio-economic systems that bring growth benefits to all, nor legal and political structures that ensure rights and freedom for the citizenry. A key lesson from SPO's experience with community-based organizations (CBOs) has been that capacities should be built, not merely so CBOs can run projects, but also to empower them to fight for improved socioeconomic and political systems. Realizing the importance of good governance in ensuring human development, social justice and personal freedom for all, SPO has gradually modified its capacity building programme to focus on capacity for good governance.

This approach is based on SPO's strong belief that every activist is a potential councillor and every councillor a potential provincial legislator. SPO encourages CBOs' initiatives for development, as checks and balances and accountability are aired through their actions. It places much importance on the stimulation of local leadership, growth of capacity to initiate projects and organize self-help, and acquisition of skills, recognizing that these developments are critical in building the capacity for good governance.

In this backdrop, SPO is extensively working with two major groups: Community based organizations (CBOs) and Union Councils (UCs); emphasizing improvements in the programmes, process and structures of these bodies is the core thrust of SPO's intervention.

1.1 Development Planning and Management Programme

Since 1992 SPO has offered the Development Planning and Management (DPM) training module in underdeveloped areas of Pakistan to help grassroots organizations envisage, plan, fund, implement, and monitor development projects in their communities; to improve their own programmes, processes and structures; and to recognize and fight for their rights. The participant organizations include CBOs, which traditionally include mostly male members, and women organizations (WOs), which are staffed entirely by women and, in most cases, have been mobilized by SPO itself through its Women's Programme.

Using a systematic process, SPO appraises and selects organizations that will be offered DPM training, forms regional 'clusters' of these partner organizations, and conducts needs assessments to customize training contents. The DPM training curriculum and methodology have evolved with SPO's experience and are geared to meet the special needs of rural CBOs and WOs. SPO's seasoned faculty provides the training over a period of 15 months, and the learning and progress of participant organizations is continuously monitored.

Towards the end of the DPM training cycle, each participant organization is provided a grant of Rs. 10,000, referred to as '*choti* (small) funding', to implement an actual development project in its community. This tests the organization's learning, helps it be received as a development player in its community, and builds its confidence. Thus, through a 35-step contact cycle, CBOs are identified, assessed, and trained to become development organizations capable of conducting community development projects.

The DPM training modules are devised to create awareness about political systems through rights-based approach, and advocacy. They have also been made more convenient for providing training to illiterate women groups and elected members of Union Councils in underdeveloped areas of Pakistan. The DPM programme consists of 22 days, which are divided into five workshops. (*Please see details in the following table*)

Workshop	Topic	Duration	Contents
DPM 1	Concepts of Development	5 days	a. Development concepts b. Political participation c. Roles and responsibilities under new local government system d. Training techniques
DPM 2	Organizational Management	4 days	e. Leadership and decision-making f. Conflict resolution g. Financial management
DPM 3	Situation Assessment	4 days	h. Rights-based approaches i. Advocacy j. Survey techniques
DPM 4	Programme/Project Planning	5 days	k. Planning l. Proposal development
DPM 5	Programme/Project Management	4 days	m. Implementation n. Monitoring and evaluation

SPO is now providing training services to the elected members of local body institutions (LBIs). By training LBIs, SPO aspires to enable them to envision community development, coordinate with local stakeholders, including community members, CBOs, and line departments; implement appropriate programmes and projects; and function as efficient and effective organizations.

SPO has developed several training modules for the union and village councils of Pakistan. The capacity building programme for LBIs consists of nine workshops and is structured as follows:

Workshop	Topic	Contents
UC Module 1	Concepts of Development and Political Participation	a. Development concepts b. Human rights and international law c. Advocacy d. Political participation e. Devolution of power f. Local government ordinance g. Roles and responsibilities under new local government system
UC Module 2	Leadership Development and Decision-Making	Leadership and decision making Conflict resolution Communication skills Organizational management Financial management
UC Module 3	Project Planning and Management	Situation analysis PRA

		Proposal Development Project management
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1.4 Capacity Building and Funding with TVO

In 2002–03, SPO and the Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO) agreed to collaborate in assisting one another’s partner organizations. Under this partnership, SPO will extend its capacity building services to TVO’s partner organizations, while TVO will extend its funds to SPO’s partners so they can implement community development initiatives. Other areas of collaboration are also being explored. TVO and SPO have historically worked in similar social sectors. Thus, apart from optimising benefits for the two organizations’ partners, this collaboration will help the two NGOs avoid duplicating one another’s efforts.

During the reporting period, SPO and TVO initiated a project worth Rs.6.9 million to train some 740 representatives of 370 *tehsil*-level partner organizations of TVO in organizational management. The areas covered in the trainings include basic development concepts; environmental awareness; gender awareness, SWOT analysis; governance of CBOs/NGOs; organizational history and problems; Registration Act of 1961; effective meeting and record keeping; situation assessment and analysis techniques, including baseline surveys; participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) tools; office management and financial management.

1.5 Support to the Saving Newborn Lives Project with Save the Children USA

In May 2003, SPO entered a partnership with Save the Children USA to support the latter’s Saving Newborn Lives (SNL) project. SNL is an initiative of Save the Children USA and is funded by the Bill & Malinda Gates Foundation. It aims to improve the health of women, girls and infants in Pakistan. Under this initiative, a Behaviour Change Communication Project will be implemented by selected NGOs in Sindh and NWFP to change negative practices and attitudes regarding reproductive health. SPO’s role will be to build the capacity of these implementing NGOs.

The NGOs selected for Sindh include Badin Rural Development Society (BRDS); Sami Samaj Sujjag Sangat, Umarnot; Development Planning and Management Graduates Coordinating Council (DPMGCC), Shikarpur; and Sahkar Dost Welfare Association, Naushahro Feroze. The major areas being covered by SPO in the NGOs’ training are social mobilization, communication skills for effective advocacy, organizational development, monitoring and evaluation, and project proposal development.

An orientation workshop was conducted in Sindh in June 2003 and attended by representatives of these NGOs. Owing to delays in the identification of NGOs in NWFP, trainings for this province had to be postponed to October 2003.

1.6 Supporting Democratic Governance

Local Government Plan 2002

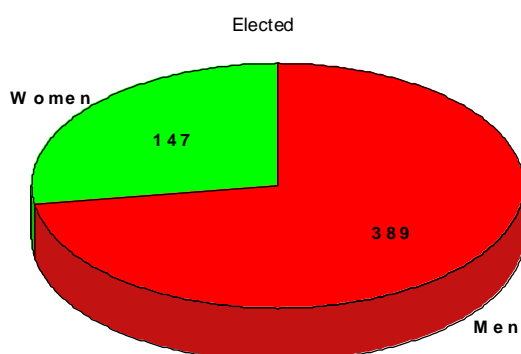
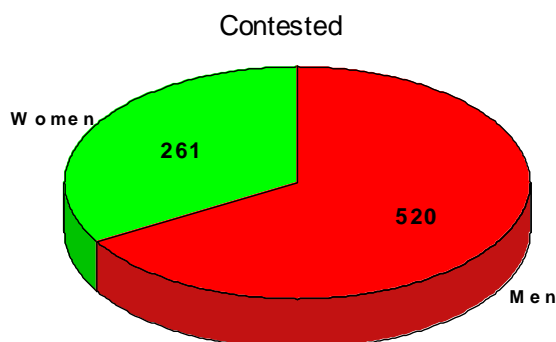
When the new local government debate was initiated in 2000, participatory development coalitions—networks of SPO partner organizations—participated vigorously in provincial as well as national forums arranged to finalize the design of the new system. During the Local Bodies Elections in December 2002, members of SPO partner organizations not only supported the electoral process but also ensured active female participation. A wide-ranging consultation process was initiated by SPO across Pakistan, including a series of workshops attended by representatives of the government, NGOs, CBOs, and the communities. SPO also partnered with other organizations in this process, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Aurat Foundation.

Partner Organizations' Participation in Local Government Elections

For about a decade, SPO has been preparing grassroots organizations as well as civil society networks to play a responsible and active role in debate, decision-making, and implementation regarding development issues. The Local Bodies Elections, held in December 2002, offered an ideal opportunity for SPO's partners to enter a wider stage of development decision-making.

In all, 781 members of SPO partner organizations contested the elections and 536 got elected. An even larger number of SPO-trained activists participated to support the electoral process, campaigning, canvassing, and bringing the development agenda to the fore. The training of elected SPO partners is expected to stand them in good stead in their new roles: their leadership, planning and management skills have been honed; they are sensitised towards gender and environmental issues; and they are able to network purposefully and effectively with other development stakeholders.

Participation of SPO Partner Organization Members in Local Bodies Elections



Supporting Democratic Electoral Processes in Pakistan

In partnership with UNDP and the Election Commission of Pakistan, SPO initiated the "Supporting Democratic Electoral Processes in Pakistan" Project in 2002. The project's objective was to increase voter turnout, especially women's participation, in the Local Bodies Elections. An enabling environment was created for women's effective participation by raising awareness about gender equity, good governance, individual responsibility, and participation at the mass level. The project was conducted in 11 districts of Sindh and NWFP and had a visible impact on attitudes towards women's participation in politics. Stakeholders who helped raise awareness during the project included politicians, communities, female students, journalists, CBOs, civil society organizations, and NGOs.

Devolution Support Project

During the reporting period, SPO signed an agreement with Cowater International Inc. to participate in the Devolution Support Project (DSP). DSP is part of the Democratic Governance Program, which is being funded by CIDA to facilitate the Government of Pakistan in implementing its Devolution Plan.

DSP will support the government in promoting democratic local governance by introducing pragmatic and innovative ideas and tools to facilitate the change process and transition to a more accountable, transparent and democratic system of government. The first phase of the program will be conducted by a consortium of five organizations led by Cowater International and including SPO, Semiotics, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and Deloitte Touche and Tohmatsu.

An inception mission for the project was conducted in March–April 2003 by representatives of CIDA, Salasan, Cowater International and SPO. SPO has engaged a consultant to develop and implement an effective strategy to enhance women’s participation in the devolution process, both at beneficiary and decision-maker level, and to ensure that gender considerations are effectively integrated in the project.

Getting the Balance Right Project

SPO was selected to implement the ‘Getting the Balance Right’ project, which is supported by the Gender Equality Project funded by Department for International Development (DFID), UK. It is aimed at linking women councillors with various financial and non-financial resources available at district level so that they can fully utilize their 33-percent representation to promote women’s development in the country.

The objective of the project is to supplement and strengthen initiatives being undertaken by different organizations for capacity building of women councillors by:

- Training women councillors to collect information, analyse it in the perspective of women issues in their areas, and define actions;
- Linking the women councillors with relevant stakeholders, including government line departments in the district, civil society organizations working for women’s development, National Commission for the Status of Women, Ministry of Social Welfare and Women Development, and all other relevant institutions and resources so that they can take effective actions to respond to women related issues such as economic empowerment, health, education, legal rights, and violence against women; and
- Creating a database of resources, both in print and visual form, to facilitate women councillors’ work and provide a ready reference.

SPO also expects to develop the capacity of its own Women’s Programme through this project.

Initially, SPO will build the capacity of approximately 400 women councillors from different regions. The project will be piloted in four districts, namely, Turbat (Balochistan), Hyderabad (Sindh), Peshawar (NWFP) and Multan (Punjab). In time, it may be replicated in other districts under SPO’s Women’s and Governance Programmes.

An initial testing of the project was planned in District Khusab in which 25 women councillors were to be involved. During the reporting period, groundwork for the project was completed, Union Councils for the test phase were identified, and meetings were held with women councillors and the Nazim and District Coordinating Officer (DCO) of Khusab.

Local Governance in Kech

SPO’s programme in District Kech in Balochistan was previously Centerd on the Village Education Programme (VEP), a special programme initiated in 1993 to motivate, mobilize and offer non-formal education to women in the Mekran Division of Balochistan. The programme’s focus has been shifting increasingly towards capacity building and governance, based on SPO’s conclusion that, compared

with non-formal education, political awareness for democratic change would be a more effective catalyst for development initiatives in Mekran. More details about the Village Education Programme are provided in the chapter entitled 'Programmes for Education'.

In 2000, in response to the government's devolution plan and the local bodies elections, SPO worked with other development organizations to mobilize women in 38 Union Councils in District Kech. As a result of this experience, the Kech Governance and Development Network was set up in 2002 to mobilize local communities so they play an effective role in the local government. A strategic planning workshop was held, which helped in defining the role of the network. The network includes 20 representatives of local government bodies and NGOs working in Kech and provides a platform for joint discussions and activities. Members include the District Nazim, who is the Chairperson, the DCO, Executive District Officer, (EDOs) of various line departments, and representatives of major NGOs in Turbat, such as Marie Stopes, Trust for Voluntary Organizations, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, and Mekran Resource Center.

The Kech Governance and Development Network coordinated to mobilize communities of all 38 Union Councils in Kech to establish Community Citizen Boards (CCBs) and assisted in the registration of the CCBs. So far, 59 have been registered and provided technical assistance in developing project proposals.

However the release of funds for the CCBs still suffers a delay on behalf of the government and has restricted their activities to a great extent.

In addition, the network has provided support to the district government in formulating a district education policy, the local health department in its immunization programme, and the *tehsil* administration in cleaning Turbat Town. A major achievement of the network is that it has enabled intensive interaction between local government representatives and other development stakeholders; in the long term, this is expected to lead to effective partnership between the public and private sectors in Turbat. Already the district government is utilizing the network to become informed about problems faced by communities.

The network meets every two months and its secretariat revolves among the member organizations, shifting at each meeting.

After the local bodies elections, SPO started the capacity building of Union Councils in Kech. In District Turbat of Balochistan, two new clusters were formed comprising of the Union Councils for Balicha and for Malikabad. Details about the capacity building of UCs in Kech are provided in the section on 'Capacity Building for Development and Good Governance'.

Setting New Standards: Union Council Balicha

When SPO Kech began its efforts for the capacity building of union councils in 2003, it selected the union councils of Malikabad and Balicha, both of which were willing to receive training from SPO due to its longstanding presence in District Turbat. A training package was developed for the councillors as well as local WOs and CBOs. Through the training, the councillors learnt about development concepts, leadership development, and project planning and management. Directly after the training, coordination between the union councillors and CBOs increased and they began working together on development projects.

Recently, Education Sector Reforms Assistance (ESRA) launched a programme of education reforms in District Turbat, aimed at promoting quality education and increasing the literacy rate. A steering committee comprising of 15 members was set up under ESRA to evaluate the district's 38 union councils and select one Model Union Council that could coordinate with community members and was also well connected with CBOs and government line departments. When SPO Kech came to know of ESRA's programme, it introduced UC Balicha, which had undergone the SPO capacity building cycle, to the steering committee. After a thorough evaluation, UC Balicha was selected as the Model Union Council: through SPO's training, the councillors had acquired the skills required to implement the programme successfully with a clear vision for community development. The union council was also well connected with line departments as well as CBOs.

UC Balicha's case depicts the enormous difference that capacity building can make in local body institutions. In coming years, SPO will continue to contribute to good governance by training local institutions to become valued, indeed model partners in development.

2. Programmes for Women

Deprived on many fronts, women form a major marginalized sector of society. As SPO represents the disadvantaged and works to bring improvement in their lives, it lays particular emphasis on the capacity enhancement of women. The integration of women into the development process is one of SPO's top priorities and the organization is becoming a recognized leader in gender responsive programming in all of its development initiatives. Through its work with grassroots communities, SPO seeks to encourage and support initiatives that increase women's decision-making and participation in economic, political and social processes; improve women's access to resources; improve the level of education of women and girls; and promote the human rights of women.

2.1 Women's Programme

The Women's Programme is a core programme of SPO and has two purposes: to mobilize women's groups, which involves motivating men as well as women in the target communities; and to build the capacity of the women organizations through DPM training and other support offered by SPO to CBOs. This approach recognizes the fact that cultural segregation of men and women in local communities is too strong to allow women to participate meaningfully in organizations and projects in which men are also involved in decision-making. It also allows women to focus on the problems that they perceive to be the most serious, and to gain confidence in their own ability to contribute to local development.

In 2002–03, SPO continued its mobilization strategy. Partner CBOs, consisting of male members, were encouraged to support women organizations' formation in their areas; these CBOs paved the way for female group formation and training. SPO modified its capacity building programme so that there is now more emphasis on initiating and sustaining female groups. The trained women development organizations demonstrated improving project management skills in their use of *choti* and social sector funding, although they were not able to implement projects entirely without the assistance of CBOs. Some of them have reached a maturity level where they can access external resources to fund their projects, for instance through linkages with the Trust for Voluntary Organizations and Canada Fund.

Progress in the formation of women organization clusters, the capacity building of WOs, and *choti* funding utilization by WOs is reported in the section on 'Capacity Building for Development and Good Governance'.

2.2 Support for Women in Governance

During the review period, SPO undertook two projects specifically to promote women's participation in the political arena: the Supporting Electoral Processes in Pakistan project (with UNDP and the Election Commission of Pakistan), which sought to increase women's participation in the local bodies elections held in December 2002, and the Getting the Balance Right project (funded by DFID), which aims at capacity enhancement of elected women councillors.

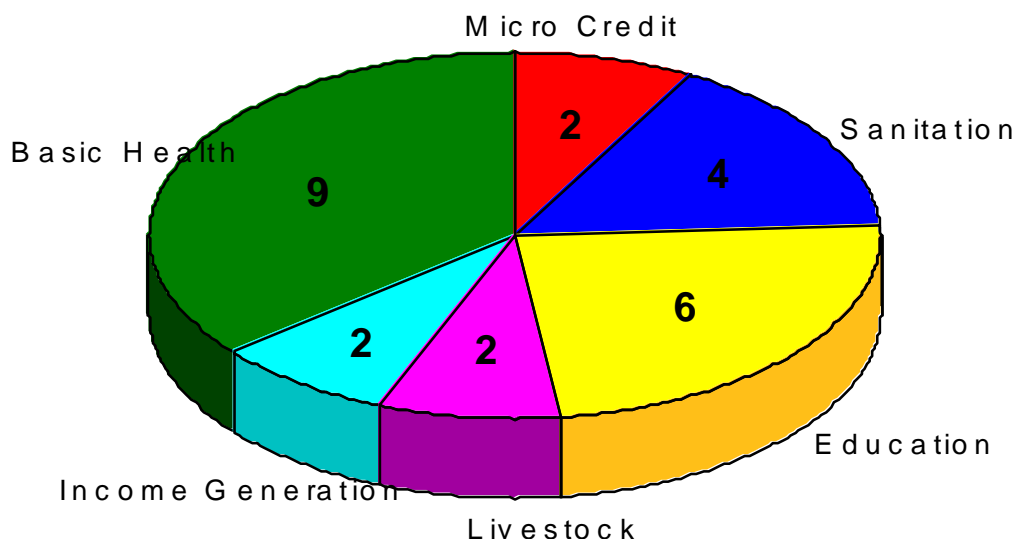
In all its other activities to promote good governance, SPO especially integrated the special needs of women. As a result of the organization's mobilization efforts, 261 WO members contested the local bodies elections of whom 147 were elected. Of the elected women, 16 were graduates of the DPM programme. Likewise, as a member of the consortium conducting the CIDA-funded Devolution Support Project, SPO is devising a strategy to integrate gender concerns in the implementation of the government's devolution of power plan. Similarly, women beneficiaries have been specifically involved in governance support activities of SPO in Kech.

Details of the above interventions of SPO appear in the section on 'Capacity Building for Development and Good Governance'.

2.3 Support for Women’s Projects

In 2002–03, SPO continued to fund initiatives of women organizations through the social sector fund (SSF). Details about the SSF programme are provided in the next section (‘Social Sector Fund’). The sectors for which women organizations utilized SPO’s SSF are presented in the table below.

Social Sector Fund Projects Implemented by Partners in 2002 - 03



2.4 Support for Women’s Education

SPO continued to implement the Village Education Programme to promote female education in Balochistan. Details of this programme appear later in this report, in the section entitled ‘Programmes for Education’.

2.5 Gender Resource Center

SPO established a Gender Resource Center (GRC) in Turbat that houses about 250 books on gender and development, governance, local bodies, women issues, and the environment, as well as video and audio material on various development issues acquired from the Interactive Resource Center. Books and manuals at the resource Center have been catalogued, and staff and other stakeholders are benefiting from its resources.

A Destiny of Her Own: AZT Asiabad

Ordinarily, the future is bleak for a young woman in a rural community whose husband is a drug addict, abuses her, and then leaves her and her children to sift for themselves. Not so for Mahrung, a resident of village Asiabad, Turbat, who availed the support available from SPO’s Village Education Programme to carve a new life for herself.

Returning to her parents’ home after her husband left her, Mahrung completed her primary education

from the Noken-Saba school being run under VEP. When the AZT Asiabad was formed, she was selected as its President.

To generate income for women, the AZT designed a date processing project. Mahrung's commitment to the project was so high that she convinced her father to donate a piece of land to the AZT to set up the date processing unit.

Today, a large building stands on this plot. This is where women process and pack dates seasonally, and where AZT Asiabad holds its meetings. The now independent Mahrung, who had never travelled beyond Turbat, frequently visits Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukker, Lahore, Islamabad and Multan to market the dates every year. Her communication skills have improved along with her mobility. From being the battered wife of a drug addict, Mahrung has empowered herself to become a source of strength and inspiration to her children and to all other women in her village.

3. Social Sector Fund

SPO views its capacity building efforts as political actions that are carried out so participants can bring about positive social change; without this social change, capacity building would be futile. SPO's Social Sector Fund (SSF) forges the initial links between the organization's political actions (i.e., capacity building) and tangible social change (i.e., improved quality of life): under this programme area, SPO extends financial and technical assistance for small-scale community projects that are conceived, developed and carried out by its partner CBOs and WDOs. Not only does the SSF improve the quality of life at the community level—through improved health, sanitation, and education services, income generation and micro credit opportunities, and some human rights projects—but it also teaches implementing partner organizations how to run their own development projects and monitor public sector projects in their area.

To be eligible for funding, the projects must belong to specific social sectors, which, as of 2003, include health, education, environment, agriculture and livestock, and governance. In addition, the projects must be sensitive to gender issues, environmentally benign, and beneficial to marginalized segments of the community.

In 2002–03, SSF project policies and procedures were updated at the SPO National Center, compiled into a single document, 'SPO Project Policy and Guidelines', and shared with all regional offices. The forms for compiling information about projects were revised and made simpler. They were also translated into Urdu and local languages so that partner organizations can submit their proposals in the language of their choice. Sections on gender and environmental issues were added to ensure that they are covered in all project proposals. Where SSF funded projects require technical or human resource development assistance from SPO, such assistance is now extended by SPO through the SSF programme.

The maximum amount of SPO's funding is 80 percent of the project cost or Rs.50,000, whichever is less. Projects are selected for funding by a Regional Project Approval Committee comprising of senior governing executives of SPO. SPO continues to encourage its partners to solicit funds from other donors as well.

Projects Undertaken by Partner Organizations with Social Sector Funding in 2002–03

Sector	Punjab		NWFP		Balochistan		Sindh	
	CBOs	WDOs	CBOs	WDOs	CBOs	WDOs	CBOs	WDOs
Micro Credit	3	1	-	-	2	1	-	-
Infrastructure	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Sanitation	2	-	6	4	-	-	1	-
Education	4	3	4	3	1	-	8	-
Livestock	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Income Generation	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	-
Irrigation	3	-	-	-	7	-	1	-
Basic Health	5	6	5	3	1	-	2	-
Total	16	11	17	11	13	3	12	0

Changing Futures: Shah Latif Social Welfare and Educational Society

From early childhood, Shazia Rehman has lived in Memon Goth in Malir District. In her growing years, the only schools in the area were either too expensive, or provided very poor quality education, which made for a very insipid academic life for most children. Shazia's case, however, became different. Something in her life made it possible to enjoy studies, to strive to excel, and to eventually become a teacher, capable of earning and of helping other children to learn.

That something in Shazia's life was the Shah Latif Social Welfare and Educational Society, a DPM partner of SPO, which aspired to raise the educational standards for children in Memon Goth. When Shazia started studying for her Matriculation, she was an average student, in great need of coaching and guidance. She learnt about coaching classes offered by the Shah Latif school and signed up for only Rs.20 per month. Joining these classes transformed Shazia's academic life. She became a bright student and developed great interest in her studies. When members of Shah Latif Social Welfare and Educational Society completed their DPM training in 2001, they were funded by SPO to extend rooms to accommodate more children in the school. At this time, the school recruited Shazia as a teacher at a salary of Rs. 850.

Today, Shazia's salary is Rs.1,700. The most educated member of her household, she guides her siblings and is an earning hand for her parents. She says her case isn't the only one; the school has improved the educational conditions of many other children in the area who could neither afford to go to good schools nor receive quality coaching. The commitment of Shah Latif Social Welfare and Educational Society is changing life in important ways in Memon Goth.

4. Strengthening Civil Society

Civil society plays a basic role in voicing people's opinions and questioning powers; it represents politics of consent, while the state represents politics of domination. SPO has learnt the importance of pluralism and diversity, and its work consolidates the actions of CBOs by organizing them into networks through which people collectively voice their concerns. Thus, by establishing or becoming a part of networks, SPO strengthens civil society to provide solidarity to community actions. Since its inception, the organization has been engaged in developing and strengthening networks of development organizations in Pakistan to promote dialogue and collaboration and encourage participatory approaches to development on a broader level. All DPM graduate organizations are part of participatory development coalitions (PDCs), which provide a platform for networking and joint action. Individual partner organizations as well as PDCs have been facilitated in many ways in building linkages with other local and national development organizations.

During the reporting period, SPO launched its civil society networks programme under which existing PDCs are being transformed and new networks are being established to play more focused and effective roles. These networks will primarily be engaged in advocacy concerning selected development themes. They will promote community dialogues, rights-based and participatory approaches, political awareness, and local governance in their regions.

4.1 Transformation of PDCs

Previously, PDCs had been responsible for replicating DPM training for other CBOs in their region; this segment of their role was withdrawn because most coalitions lacked the capacity required. Instead, they were prepared for the role for which they are best positioned: creating political awareness and working with local communities as well as local governments to promote effective governance.

During the reporting period, SPO provided intensive institutional support to PDCs. Each PDC was guided through a vision exercise to identify core issues in its district and select the area in which the PDC will conduct research studies, advocacy, and information dissemination. Strategic planning workshops and capacity building programmes were conducted concerning advocacy, rights-based approaches, and political participation for good governance. SPO is also providing Rs.3,000 per month to each PDC as administrative support.

4.2 Impact of Civil Society Networks

Strengthening PDCs has had many positive results. During the reporting period, PDCs worked actively to get their member organizations registered. They updated member organizations on current development issues; disseminated information and organized dialogues on gender equity, human rights and legal rights; and initiated rights-based advocacy. Their most prominent impact was felt in the events surrounding local elections in the country: PDCs participated vigorously in provincial and national dialogues to assist the government in finalizing the Devolution of Power Plan, and mobilized communities to increase women's participation in elections.

Among the most significant achievements of PDCs, Takht Bai PDC, one of the oldest PDCs formed by SPO, was able to acquire projects from the World Bank. The projects were negotiated and implemented by member organizations for community development. PDC Lodhran transferred DPM skills to community citizen boards, which the PDC itself got registered. The PDC is also exploring possible opportunities to collaborate with the district management. Kabeerwala PDC did considerable work on 'Social Harmony for Development'. The PDC regularly arranged dialogues and seminars to reduce tension between minority groups in the area and the Muslim community. Eminent religious scholars were invited to deliver lectures on these occasions. Sibbi PDC conducted a research study on the problems faced by wildlife in the region. Hyderabad Development Coordinating Organization, a PDC, undertook vigorous advocacy campaigns on the issues of *Karo Kari* (honour killings) and feudal oppression.

PDCs Strengthened by SPO in 2002–03

Quetta	NWFP	Punjab	Sindh
Sibi Bolan Pishin Ziarat Mastung Noshki	Takht Bhai Charsadda Mardan Nowshera	Kabirwala Bahawalpur Lodhran D.G.Khan Muzaffargarh Kot Addu Sargodha Mianwala Khushab	Hala Hyderabad Shikarpur Ghotki Nawabshah Malir
Total: 6	Total: 4	Total: 9	Total: 6

4.3 Networks and Linkages

SPO has been recognized by many national and international donor agencies as a potential partner for the implementation of development programmes and projects. It has formed and maintained networks and linkages with IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Micro Credit Summit, and the International Capacity Building Forum. SPO is also represented on a host of sectoral, provincial and national networks, including Pakistan NGO Forum (PNF), Punjab NGO Coordination Council (PNCC), Sarhad NGO Ittehad (SNI), Balochistan NGO Federation (BNF), and Sindh NGO Federation (SNF), among others.

This year, SPO participated in various events organized by these networks and played an active role as a member. The main issue on the agenda was certification of NGOs. Being sensitive to the problems of grassroots communities and the policies formulated by the government to uplift them, SPO, as a member of these networks, hosted two events concerning the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and formulated recommendations that were sent to the Pakistan NGO Forum.

Joint Front Against Suppression: Kot Addu PDC

Until recently, rural communities in District Muzaffargarh bore all the signs of centuries of external domination. Pakistan's independence had not really filtered into the lives of the local people; for them, British rulers had merely been replaced by feudal landlords, who had vested interests in keeping them poor, illiterate and powerless. Extremely poor socioeconomic conditions and dejection afflicted the rural people.

In a village called Qasba Jahan Khan in Tehsil Kot Addu, a group of men who wanted to improve their people's lives came together to create a CBO called Allah-o-Akbar. In 1995, the CBO came into contact with SPO and underwent the DPM training programme. What it learnt convinced the CBO that change was possible, provided the local communities could be united.

Allah-o-Akbar began networking in earnest, reaching out to nearby villages and exposing people to the DPM programme. Hope rose among the people as Allah-o-Akbar mobilized them to form community organizations.

The people's power was first tested when the construction of a road leading to Jahan Khan was blocked by local landlords. The people needed this road. Allah-o-Akbar and the other community organizations bonded in a strong network that applied pressure on both the feudal lords and government officials. Backed by local communities, the network—Kot Addu PDC—was strong enough to break feudal authority and the road was completed.

Kot Addu PDC's next milestone achievement was leading the campaign for young Kausar in the 2001 elections. The election of Kausar, a local woman, as District Councillor changed the very perception of women's potential in the area.

The profound impact of Kot Addu PDC's continuing efforts is visible in the socio-political and socio-

cultural scenario in Muzaffargarh. Some 44 CBOs have been formed since Allah-o-Akber's inception, forming a network that feudal landlords take very seriously. District Councillor Kausar's very presence has broken down the '*Bibi Culture*' within the feudal community, under which women were not even allowed to step outside their houses: local landlords are nominating their wives and daughters to participate in elections, and men and women are attending DPM training together in the area.

5. Programmes for Education

In any country, education plays a vital role in human resource development. It not only makes individuals more productive and efficient, but also leads the economy towards sustainable development. It is not only a goal in itself but is a means to many other goals in individual and collective life. The situation of education in Pakistan is beset with multifaceted problems that need immediate attention. Low enrolment rate at primary level, regional and gender disparities, high drop-out rate, lack of trained teachers and well developed teaching materials, and underdeveloped infrastructure of schools are some of the major problems that constitute the dilemma of the education system.

This is the age of information and knowledge is changing the fortunes of the countries across the world. Many resource poor countries have improved their economic conditions by investing in education and human resource development. In its efforts for holistic development SPO pays special attention to major sector and believes that it can help build the foundations for a more equitable and enlightened society.

In addition to its core programmes, SPO undertakes various sectoral programmes to respond to specific development needs of the communities with which it works. A core aim of many of these sectoral programmes is education, particularly for education of women, which is traditionally neglected in Pakistan. During the reporting period, SPO worked on four programmes related to child welfare and female education, details of which are presented in this section.

5.1 Early Childhood Care and Development

SPO had been implementing the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) project in NWFP since 1998, in collaboration with UNICEF. The project aims to promote a rural based model of ECCD by promoting awareness on the significance of early child care and development in districts Kohat, Mardan, Haripur and Peshawar. The objective is to provide opportunities for holistic, physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual development of children under five years of age belonging to rural areas and urban slums. It is expected that the project will enhance ECCD policy formulation and associated planning in NWFP.

In 2002–03, a number of events were organized to train representatives of Education, Health and Social Welfare Departments in four target districts in ECCD concepts and the use of the national ECCD training kit. CBOs belonging to three Union Councils each from District Peshawar, Haripur, Kohat and Mardan also participated in some of these events. For outreach, printed material on ECCD was disseminated and 94 ECCD community gatherings were arranged in the four districts.

The project's impacts are being felt in the sensitisation of target communities and in the incorporation of ECCD concerns in the work of relevant government departments. Strong networking at the provincial level is evident among different stakeholders, who are analysing current ECCD policies and suggesting strategies to improve them.

5.2 Village Education Project

SPO's programme in District Kech in Balochistan was previously Centerd on the Village Education Programme (VEP), a special programme initiated in 1993 to motivate, mobilize and offer non-formal education to women in the Mekran Division of Balochistan. Through this programme, SPO has increased women's access to education and employment, enhanced their functional skills, increased awareness on women's issues, mobilized women for joint action, and helped change attitudes towards women in District Kech. Most of these achievements were realized through SPO's work with female Anjuman Zanana Taleem (AZTs: village women's development groups), the creation of village level education Centers, and the capacity building of several AZTs into women development organizations.

During the reporting period, two programme coordinators conducted a review of VEP in Turbat. Fifteen AZTs were selected for the study sample. A needs assessment of the AZTs for continuation of

the education programme was also carried out. The study highlighted problems as well as impacts of the programme and played a strategic role in the SPO management's decision about future programme direction. It has been concluded that non-formal education is no longer the most effective single entry point for development initiatives in the area, and that increasing political awareness for democratic change would be an even more effective catalyst.

During the reporting period, three clusters were formed with 31 AZTs in Turbat. AZTs renamed themselves according to the new acquired roles as development organizations. They conducted nine projects with *choti* funding, concerning education, a library, a health Center, a tuition Center, and small businesses based on micro credit.

Three pre-DPM workshops were conducted with 30 WOs of the Buleda, Turbat and Tump clusters and two DPM-II workshops were conducted with 18 WOs of Buleda and Turbat clusters. The workshops used pictorial material as well as interactive theatre. In addition, two DPM-III workshops were conducted for 18 WOs of Buleda and Turbat clusters.

Women development organizations successfully conducted two advocacy campaigns in Turbat, one on the unfair allocation of funds from the *bait-ul-maal* and the other on lack of teachers in government schools. Both campaigns were successful and the AZTs were able to rectify the issues. The women organizations were linked with government line departments to strengthen their capacity to effect change.

5.3 Ammal Project

The Ammal Project seeks to increase girls' access to and attendance at primary schools in NFWP. It is a joint venture of the Government of NFWP, DFID and SPO. The first phase of this project is being implemented in Dera Ismail Khan by SPO.

Key activities of the project include:

- Increasing awareness and motivation in rural communities regarding non-formal education for girls;
- Forming, training and linking Village Education Committees (VECs);
- Supporting community-based primary schools;
- Developing a community-based system for monitoring schools; and
- Developing a community supported education concept.

During the reporting period, the contract with DFID came to an end and the administration of 12 out of 38 schools being run under the Ammal Project was taken up by the Government. Support for three additional schools has been ensured through an agreement between SPO and the Rural Social Development Programme (RSDP). RSDP will support these schools for the next three years.

A milestone achievement during the reporting period was that 455 students of schools functioning under the Ammal project appeared in the Government Board examinations for Class 5, and 401 passed, bringing the overall pass percentage to 88 percent.

5.4 Tawana Pakistan

Tawana Pakistan is a school nutrition project for 5- to 12-year-old girls being implemented by SPO in three districts of NFWP, i.e., Lakki Marwat, Tank and Karak. The objective of the project is to improve the nutrition status, enrolment and attendance of the girls in primary schools with sustainable community participation. It is expected that it will increase child growth rate, decrease the school dropout rate, sensitise parents regarding nutritional value, and enhance quality education.

CASE STUDY

Masi Malookan belongs to an underdeveloped area of D.I.Khan known as Tomal Khurd. She is a woman of great strength: after her husband was killed, she supported her children alone, ensuring that her sons received an education. She did not have the means to educate her daughters and spent the limited resources she had for them on getting them married.

Although she could not educate her own daughters, Masi Malookan vigorously supports the idea of education for all children. As soon as she became aware of the Ammal Project of SPO, under which a school was to be established in her village, she contacted the staff of SPO in D.I.Khan. She readily offered a space for the school without charging any rent and made proper arrangements for the provision of electricity in the building.

She went to each household within her community and mobilized parents to send their daughters to the school. Since the area did not have any school for girls, the local people did not hold the notion of educating their daughters in high esteem. However, Masi Malookan conducted the task of motivating them with great fervour as a result of which 90 girls are getting education in her school today.

At one time, the village was struck by an acute water shortage. In order to keep the girls at school comfortable, Masi Malookan took up the responsibility of bringing water from a far-off hand pump and keeping the water containers filled. Due to her efforts and zeal to provide education to girls in her community, which she could not do for her own daughters, the school has now been running successfully for four years. More and more Parents have started sending their daughters to the school and their attitudes have become much more flexible.

6. Research and Communications

Research and communications at SPO contribute in the overall realization of the organization's mission. SPO recognizes that research can strengthen its learning from the field, enabling it to analyse its programme and its impact, and to disseminate the information needed by society to formulate appropriate policies and actions for social progress.

To fulfil the broader information needs of its own programme as well as society, SPO conducts research using scientific data collection and analysis techniques. The conclusions and qualitative empirical knowledge derived form the basis of SPO's communication strategy: public messages are formulated to promote pro-people policies, and conveyed to society through academia, civil society, and government institutions.

6.1 Development Research

SPO's widespread and focused interaction with grassroots development stakeholders and its networking with other development players provides it a valuable vantage point on local and national development issues. The lessons and perspectives SPO draws for its own work can provide useful insights for other national and international development organizations as well. In order to consolidate and disseminate the knowledge to which it has access, SPO has decided to initiate development research. Under this new area, knowledge on indigenous development issues will be compiled and disseminated. Planning for this component continued through the reporting period; major issues and areas on which SPO's research would focus were defined.

6.2 Communications at SPO

Communications have always been integrated in and central to SPO programmes. The organization employs print, electronic, and inter-personal means of communication to increase participation by its stakeholders, maintain transparency for enhanced accountability, and support fundamental human and democratic norms in the society. Using targeted and informative newsletters, an interactive website, participatory dialogues, inspirational videos, in-depth research papers, thought-provoking posters, educational pamphlets, and various other tools, SPO has already crafted a niche for itself as a leading development-communications oriented organization with a nationwide outreach.

As SPO's new development approach unfolds, its reliance on innovative communications, particularly with partners and civil society stakeholders, will increase. SPO's focus on poverty alleviation through holistic development and, more specifically, on people's rights, civil society, and partnerships, requires even more intensive and well-planned communications. The challenge that SPO looks forward to is enabling information to play an important role in the empowerment of poor people.

6.3 Publications

During the reporting period, SPO published 'To Make a Stone a Flower', a collection of case studies depicting SPO's contribution in grooming CBOs and WOs in underdeveloped areas of Pakistan and the development initiatives taken by these organizations to bring about a positive change.

A series of discussion papers on the theme of 'Understanding Pakistan' has also been initiated to highlight key issues in the country. Four papers authored by eminent thinkers and researchers as well SPO staff with extensive field experience were published during the reporting period. They include:

1. The Future of English in Pakistan – Ahmar Mahboob
2. Education in Pakistan: A Survey – Dr. Tariq Rehman
3. Pakistan: The Question of Identity – Harris Khaliq
4. The Goal of Worker's Welfare and Policy Challenges – Maliha Shamim
- 5.

‘Shirkati Taraqi’

Three issues of SPO’s quarterly newsletter, ‘Shirkati Taraqi’, were published reporting activities of SPO’s Regional and National Centers and including articles on strategic development issues. The newsletter reaches almost 4,000 readers at local and national NGOs as well as SPO’s partner CBOs and WOs across the country.

Documentary Film on SPO’s Efforts

Another significant achievement during the period was the preparation of a documentary film on SPO’s efforts for social sector development and the outcomes of its capacity building programme. ‘Earth Stories’ offers an insight into SPO’s different programme areas and the efforts of development organizations trained by SPO, which are working in diverse cultural settings across the country.

In addition, SPO published its annual report for 2001–02, a brochure in Urdu and English, and other promotional materials, including a flyer on SPO, two planners, and a souvenir for the Community Institutions Convention organized by SPO in May 2003.

6.4 Development Forums

SPO arranged a number of events on current and development issues at the National as well as Regional Centers. An Omar Asghar Khan Memorial Lecture was arranged on September 2002. The late Omar Asghar Khan was a founding member of SPO, a member of its General Body, and had guided the organization since its inception. On this occasion, Dr. Tariq Rehman, a noted linguist and scholar, delivered a lecture on ‘Education, Violence and Development’. The event brought together numerous development professionals and government representatives as well as SPO staff in a productive debate on development and how it is affected by education and violence.

On Easter, a special prayer ceremony was held at the SPO National Center. It was attended by students, representatives of various NGOs, and SPO staff. Father John Nevin from Our Lady Fatima Church conducted the ceremony in which participants prayed for world peace and the destitute world over, condemning the unjustified tyranny being inflicted upon innocent people by the oppressors.

SPO arranged a number of seminars to discuss the USA led war in Iraq. The key message at these events, which were arranged in Quetta, Islamabad, Multan, Peshawar, and Hyderabad, was ‘Give Peace a Chance’. The seminars attracted political and social organizations and activists, and were addressed by eminent intellectuals and leaders. Speakers deplored the ongoing war, warning that it would only wreak havoc in Iraq and seriously damage international peace. The seminar in Quetta was the largest anti-war meeting arranged in Balochistan, while the Hyderabad seminar arranged in collaboration with the Center for Peace and Human Development South Asia, was followed by a peaceful protest march outside the Hyderabad Press Club.

In addition a forum was arranged at the National Center to pay tribute to Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah; speakers discussed her as a role model for Pakistani women, highlighting the qualities that made her a woman of substance.

In May 2003, a Community Institutions Convention was arranged by SPO Sindh. This event was attended by more than 500 representatives from social welfare organizations as well as people from all walks of life, including political workers, journalists, poets, artists, etc. The objective of the convention was to gather all members of social welfare organizations and enable them to share their experiences, and to highlight the significant role that they play in development.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

From the start, SPO has integrated monitoring in its programme implementation. Monitoring is performed for enhanced accountability of systems and for learning from experience. It helps to identify the weaknesses that need to be eradicated and the strengths that need to be built upon. Necessary modifications are also made in the programmes through well-defined monitoring and evaluation processes.

In line with its approach in all other programme activities, SPO strives to make its monitoring work participatory. This ensures that all stakeholders have a say in assessing the current situation, analysing its strengths and weaknesses, and formulating the required modifications.

Recognizing the immense importance of monitoring and evaluation in impact assessment and in learning about strengths and weaknesses, SPO maintains systems to monitor and evaluate performance at several levels:

- Monitoring of community projects is done by CBOs and a cross-section of stakeholders from the community.
- SPO's regional Programme Coordinators make regular visits to partner organizations and assess their progress as institutions. Before DPM training commences, 10 capacity building indicators are used to determine the maturity level of each organization. After the partner organizations complete their DPM training, another assessment is conducted using the same indicators.
- Monitoring is also performed by the regional Programme Coordinators after each interaction during the contact cycle to confirm where the partner organizations and their communities stand after each interaction, and to garner any lessons that could be used to correct or improve subsequent activities.
- Monitoring of Social Sector Fund projects implemented by partner organizations constitutes an important component of the overall capacity assessment process. The outcome and desired impact of the project from a community's point of view are evaluated. For this purpose, the views and findings of a cross-section of the stakeholders are solicited and, more importantly, the findings are then shared with the partner organizations for consensus and post-monitoring follow-up and learning.
- SPO's monitors from the National Center also conduct random and selective monitoring of all programme areas in collaboration with regional Programme Coordinators, partner organizations, and their communities.
- SPO as an organization also needs to learn from its experiences and to be evaluated so that it can enhance its capacity, improve services, and make necessary modifications in its programmes. For this purpose, external monitors appointed by SPO's donors make random monitoring visits to its partner organizations and to its regional and national Centers. They provide highly valuable feedback to SPO through detailed reports and meetings with the SPO team.

During the reporting year, SPO operationalised its reporting, planning and monitoring systems. In August 2002, a separate Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (MER) unit was set up to intensify and streamline MER activities within the organization. A number of activities were carried out by the MER unit to analyse the programme and its impact. Numerous visits were conducted for programme monitoring, monitoring of SSF Projects at the project and beneficiary levels, gathering case studies on SPO's interventions, and assessing the capacity of member CBOs. The findings of these visits were shared with the national and regional management to improve future activities.

7.1 Learning Information System (LIS)

SPO is one of the few NGOs in Pakistan that operate with sophisticated internal monitoring and

evaluation systems. SPO uses a computerized system to manage its monitoring and evaluation and management information. The Learning Information System (LIS), which was developed in 1995 with CIDA's help, is a database of performance information, which SPO uses for a myriad needs, and which makes information about the organization available and easily accessible for a host of users. The system tracks monthly performance of the CBOs selected and capacitated by SPO, and measures the changes in CBOs during their partnership with SPO by analysing them against capacity building indicators and generating assessment reports. An important component of LIS is the Project Information Database. Through this feature the LIS tracks the progress of projects undertaken by SPO partners who have undergone the capacity building cycle with SPO.

LIS was upgraded during the reporting period. It is now even more analytical and can be accessed through SPO's website.

7.2 Training on Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

The decentralization of SPO's regional offices was achieved to a great extent during the reporting period. Among the key issues that arose was the shifting of monitoring responsibilities to the regional level. The position of Programme Coordinator for Capacity Building and Projects Development was specifically created for monitoring at the regional level. In order to build the capacity of regional staff for this responsibility, a workshop on 'Monitoring & Evaluation' was conducted for them in March 2003, the objectives of which were to:

- Create conceptual clarity regarding MER,
- Improve skills for monitoring projects at the regional level, and
- Provide an orientation to the upgraded LIS and Project Policy Guidelines.

The workshop enhanced the ability of Programme Coordinators to assess partner organizations against SPO's capacity building indicators, and to conduct monitoring and impact assessment of SSF supported projects. The training also ensured that regional staff will adopt a standardized approach in project development in their respective regions and improved their skills for reporting according to SPO's required format.

8. Institutional Strengthening

SPO recognizes that, in due course, its core programme should be implemented without relying on external support. This is the primary aim of institutional strengthening, which is a distinct area of work for SPO. The specific objectives of institutional strengthening are to enable SPO to enhance its own capacity and functional efficiency, to continue to adapt to changing external circumstances, and to maintain its services in development. Key concerns include enhancing the programme quality, scale and team; improving communications; enhancing internal efficiency; and increasing financial viability. Improvements are effected independently as well as with assistance from internal and external monitors.

The key event that took place in this area during the reporting period was a programme evaluation. Following are some of the excerpts from the monitors' reports:

SPO External Monitoring Mission Findings, April – May 2003

Monitoring Mission carried out by Universal Management Group contracted by CIDA for SPO programme monitoring and technical assistance.

- SPO has been very active in initiating, guiding and carrying through an intensive organizational change process which has had marked positive effects on the organization's motivation, capacity and performance
- SPO has transformed itself from the relatively staid organization to one that is eagerly embracing change and innovation. This is a positive development, and suggests that SPO has some of the essential characteristics to support its continued relevance and viability.
- SPO is taking important actions to enhance the relevance of its programs and the organization itself. SPO's challenge is to pay sufficient attention to identifying and developing needed organizational capacities so that the quality of its programs and activities are not compromised.
- In the past year SPO has undertaken several important and positive initiatives to improve how it plans, manages, monitors and reports on its programs. In our view, SPO would benefit from continuing to fine-tune these capacities, paying particular attention to those used to assess the feasibility of, and plan new, programs.

Royal Netherlands Embassy – Monitoring Mission, May 26 – June 13, 2003

- The mission has the opinion that the combination of the present devolution process, grounded on principles of good governance, with the results of NGOs such as SPO, is a unique fabric and opportunity to put GG really into practice. First positive results were observed in the field in the meeting with PDC (Participatory Development Coalitions), CBOs (Community Based Organizations), FDOs (Female Development Organizations) and councillors. Many newly elected councillors trained by SPO are determined to make GG a practice in the local bodies.
- SPO has proven to have a consistent approach for capacitating POs and new leadership on the basis of the principles of GG. It has shown in - practice in Balochistan - that this will give unique opportunities to energize the Devolution Process from below, which is the only effective institutional mechanism to put GG in practice and to build up these practices from below to higher levels of the local governance system.

8.1 Governance

SPO's Board of Directors guided the organization at every step in reshaping and modifying its structure and programmes during the reporting year. The Board met five times to make decisions and provide inputs regarding policies and matters pertaining to the future programme direction, management structure, and strategies. The General Body met in December 2002 at the Annual General Meeting and again in June 2003 for an extraordinary session. A meeting of the Advisory Council was also held in August 2002.

8.2 Board's Self-assessment

SPO's Board of Directors underwent a critical self-assessment exercise in February 2003, a unique initiative for a non-profit Board in Pakistan. The aim was to clarify roles, duties, rights and responsibilities, i.e., authority and responsibility, between various organs of SPO, synthesise the Board's good and bad experiences over the years, and extract lessons for the future. The one-day workshop was conducted by Mr. Mohammed Rafiq, a General Body Member of SPO and Country Representative of IUCN Pakistan.

8.3 Programme Reviews

The SPO Senior Management Committee (SMC), comprising of senior managers at the organization, held five meetings during the reporting period to operationalise management and programme plans.

SPO maintains the participatory approach of its programmes in its internal management as well, which means that special care is taken to take into account the opinions, suggestions and inputs of its staff members in its overall programme, policies and procedures. For this purpose, Programme Review Meetings are conducted at least twice a year. Sessions of external resource persons are also arranged to increase the knowledge base of the participants on issues concerning social development. Such Programme Review Meetings were held in September 2002 and May 2003. All programme staff shared information about their activities and discussed solutions to various issues. The meeting also served as a sound induction for new staff. Major issues discussed were revision of the DPM training contents, selection of partner organizations to serve as role models for other partner organizations of

SPO, resource mobilization, and the new organizational structure. An impact assessment report on Social Sector Fund projects in Hyderabad, Turbat, Punjab, and NWFP compiled by SPO's central MER unit was also shared with the participants.

8.4 Organizational Restructuring

In June 2002, the SPO team began restructuring its programme and organizational set-up. To maintain full participation of the SPO team in this critical activity, all staff members were involved in the forward planning exercises. While the restructuring was implemented, the team was kept aware of the decisions being made at every step. The Chief Executive (CE) held individual meetings with all non-SMC staff at the National Center and wrote a memo in Urdu to all support staff across SPO to take them into confidence. He maintained a constant contact with regional heads on proposed changes and was available to all staff for queries.

The CE prioritised four main areas for immediate improvement during the Forward Planning: management structure, communication strategy, fundraising strategy, and strategy for programme consolidation and quality improvement. Four committees, one for each component, were formed to review these areas and submit recommendations by the end of August 2002. Members of the committees were nominated from across the organization. It was decided that the CE would participate in all four committees. The recommendations of these committees were compiled into an Institutional Development Plan, a road map for SPO's next phase.

The Institutional Development Plan was implemented for one year on a test basis. It was revised in June 2003. Monitoring missions from CIDA, the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE), and the Rural Social Development Programme (RSDP) played significant roles in identifying new directions for the programme, areas that needed more attention and structures that needed modification. Organizational reforms were brought about with the help of a Change Management Task Team under Institutional Development Plan-II. The task team proposed two structures after consulting various stakeholders and invited the entire SPO team for comments and suggestions. Restructuring was then carried out at the National and Regional Centers.

Throughout this process, the Board of Directors thoroughly discussed each function and staff capacity at all levels and listed a number of concerns for the Chief Executive's consideration. After exhaustive deliberations, the Board unanimously approved the structure; compensation plan; and the revisions in Human Resource, Administration and Financial policies recommended by the Internal Auditor. The new structure will be implemented from the beginning of the next reporting year.

8.5 Programme Consolidation

In the reporting period, SPO's senior management focused mainly on building a long-term prospect of the organization's role and strategy. Several detailed consultation meetings were held at the national and regional Centers. In order to streamline its programme for the future, SPO redefined its targets, outcomes and activities and formulated a new design for its programme.

8.6 Resource Mobilization

Consolidated Programme Proposal

Based on the new design for SPO's future programme, a consolidated proposal was produced and disseminated to current and potential donors. The monitoring mission from CIDA and evaluation mission from RNE added valuable insights to this business plan.

At the same time, SPO collaborated with different development stakeholders on a number of short-term programmes and projects, both to bring about the envisaged shift in its current programmes, and to mobilize resources for the organization. These ventures included:

Project Title/Description	Location	Project Period		Approved Value	Supported by
		Start Date	End Date		
Capacity Building for Good Governance	Turbat	1 Aug 2002	1 Jul 2004	CDN\$0.5 million	Canadian International Development Agency
Tawana Pakistan	NWFP, Balochistan	5 Sep 2002	30 Jun 2005	Rs.35.24 million	Aga Khan University
Training of Partner Organizations of Trust for Voluntary Organizations	Balochistan, NWFP, Punjab, Hyderabad, D.I.Khan & National Center	21 Mar 2003	30 Mar 2004	Rs. 6.9 million	Trust for Voluntary Organizations
Capacity Building of Local Partners of Save the Children USA	NWFP, Sindh	15 May 2003	31 Oct 2004	Rs.4.6 million	Save the Children USA
Gender Equality Project	Countrywide	1 May 2003	31 Jan 2004	Rs.4.8 million	Department for International Development UK

Application for No-Cost Extension

SPO also applied to CIDA and the European Union for a no-cost extension of its programme until 2004. The rationale for this extension is as follows:

- The extension will enable SPO's National Center and SPO Punjab to continue its activities to capacitate CBOs, WOs, and PDCs.
- SPO will have an opportunity to fully prepare and upgrade itself for its next five-year plan;
- The extension will provide time for SPO to negotiate with potential donors and secure funding for the next five years; and
- SPO's programmes at Turbat, Punjab and the National Center will be aligned, and the National Center will provide technical backstopping and monitoring to the Turbat programme.

In another initiative to increase programme resources, SPO applied for tax exemption to the Pakistan Commission of Income Tax in February 2003. The organization is in the process of responding to queries and making required amendments in the Memorandum and Article of Association.

Establishment of Residential Training Facilities

A large part of SPO's resources is spent on the trainings it conducts for CBOs and WOs. SPO took a major step towards self-sustainability during the reporting period by establishing Training Sections at four of its regional offices. These institutes, which have been established in Hyderabad, Multan, D.I.Khan and Turbat, comprise of residential facilities attached with fully equipped training halls. This initiative has built SPO's assets and proved significantly cost-effective as all types of trainings can be conducted in-house.

8.7 Induction of Internal Auditor

To ensure internal accountability and make management and financial procedures more efficient and transparent, an internal auditor was recruited in March 2003. Notably, few other national level NGOs in Pakistan have an internal auditor.

8.8 Staff Development Activities

SPO has been consistently building the capacity of its staff in management and development. During the review period, specific development needs of the staff were identified and prioritised through a formal assessment. Trainers were trained to deliver the revised DPM module. Exposure visits were undertaken by six staff members to Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka and four staff members to Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Bangladesh. A one-day orientation workshop on Result-Based Management (RBM) was conducted at each regional office to enable monitoring beyond activities. In this workshop, the programme staff were informed that the purpose of the follow-up of DPM workshops had been revised by expanding its scope from replication of DPM learning to developing an action plan to achieve outcomes.

In addition, new staff underwent different trainings and exchange visits within and outside SPO to gain skills relevant to their positions.

Moreover, decentralization of SPO's regional Centers was fully realized and their management is now functioning effectively with a high degree of autonomy.

8.9 IT at SPO

The review period was marked by some major improvements in the IT system at SPO. With the efforts of the SPO Net Administrator, an exchange server was installed at the National Center to maintain e-mails in-house. The network was shifted from dial-up system to the Digital Subscribe Line (DSL), which provides a comparatively faster connection on the Internet. Due to this facility, programme staff at the National Center now enjoy quicker and wider access to information available on the Internet. Moreover e-mails are sent and received more easily, considerably increasing communication between the regional offices and the National Center. The Local Area Network (LAN) has expanded from 15 to 22 nodes at the National Center, while at SPO Turbat office also, networking has substantially improved.