

RESEARCH BRIEF

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Third Tier Organizations (TTOs) & their Partner Organizations (POs)

Introduction

The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), in collaboration with its partner organizations (POs), supports the mobilization and development of local organizations run by citizen volunteers to address local needs. These organizations are started at the neighborhood level, and then federated up to form representative volunteer bodies representing larger areas. Third Tier Organizations (TTOs), also known as Local Support Organizations (LSOs) cover the Union Council, an area with average population 30,000. There are now over 1,000 TTOs active across Pakistan. These organizations are active in health, education, microfinance, human rights, infrastructure, and other sectors.

PPAF is collaborating with a joint research team from Lahore School of Economics, Oxford University, and Duke University, to study the activities of these TTOs and how they can be supported to represent their communities and expand and improve their activities. In Autumn 2014, the team conducted a survey of 850 TTOs (including all except the most recently formed). The survey gathered data in a meeting with each TTO's Executive Body (EB) on its governance, activities, and plans for the future, as well as characteristics of the EB members. Data on village characteristics and TTO activity in that village were also collected from one local contact in each village in every UC. In a randomly - selected subset of 150 UCs, a representative sample of households was also interviewed to gather data on perceptions of the TTO and household-level assistance from the TTO. In addition, the data about the relationship of the Partner Organizations (POs) with their respective TTOs was collected through the local field offices of each of the PO. A total of 109 field offices were interviewed to collect this data and the respondents were mostly social mobilisers (38%) and unit in charge (28%).¹

PPAF is engaged with local community organizations through 21 POs spread across the country, including both the Rural Support Programme (RSPs) and non-RSPs (refer to Table 1). The largest PO is the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) that is engaged with 60% of the TTOs, followed by Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) (11%), Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) (8%) and Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) (7%).

This is one of a series of briefs analyzing findings from the TTO Baseline Survey. This brief focuses on analyzing the relationship that the TTOs have with their respective PO; this relationship is one of the most valuable linkages for these organizations.

Section 2 details the various forms of PO involvement with their respective TTOs while Section 3 discusses the type and frequency with which these TTOs report to their PO. Section 4 examines the opinion that PO representatives have about their TTOs while Section 5 concludes with a brief overview highlighting the key points of the analysis.

¹ Other types of respondents included finance officer, DPM, LSO coordinator, social senior officer, project managers, and civil society organisers. Out of these 109 PO respondents, 85 were males while 24 of the respondents were females.



Level of PO involvement in TTO activities

PO involvement in the activities of their TTOs varies considerably, with around 35% of TTOs reporting active involvement of their respective PO in more than 75% of their activities while almost 40% of them reporting no involvement of their PO in any of their activities (Figure 1). This heterogeneity in the relationship between the TTO and their PO may reflect a combination of factors. One is that some TTOs may need more assistance – for example, in early stages of their development or when they are working to scale up a new activity – while others may be more independent. Another is that POs may have different levels of resources available to work with TTOs in different areas.

Figure 1

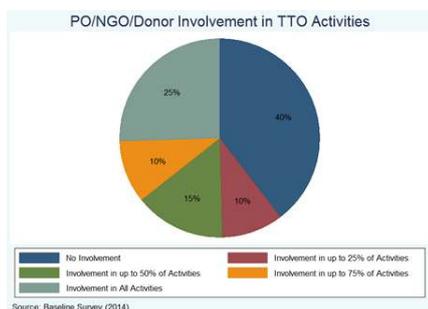


Figure 2

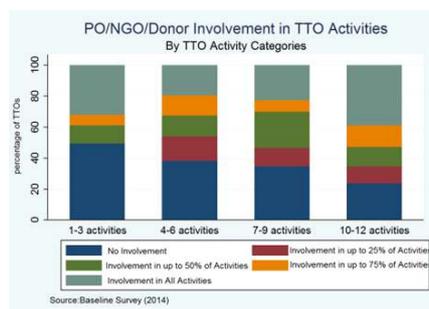


Figure 3

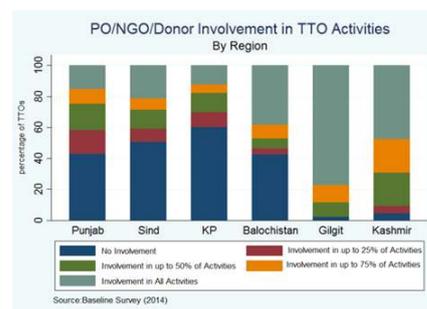


Figure 2 shows the relationship between the level of PO involvement and the number of activities undertaken by the TTOs. The greatest level of PO involvement is with the most active TTOs, which undertook more than ten activities in the last 12 months, while the least level of PO involvement is with the least active TTOs. This could suggest that PO support is a major driver of these activities, or alternatively that the TTOs who take the most initiative are rewarded with more time and assistance from the PO. This pattern suggests there may be potential for more support from the PO to less active TTOs.

A further analysis of PO involvement across geographical boundaries reveals significant variation with greatest level of PO involvement concentrated in Gilgit and Kashmir regions (Figure 3). This is somewhat surprising since TTOs have been established for the longest in these regions; it could be that the POs themselves are also more established in the field in these areas, that the high activity levels of these TTOs attract greater PO attention and funding, or alternatively, that these TTOs are more reliant on the PO to conduct their activities. Similarly, for regions where TTOs report little or no involvement of their PO in their activities, either these TTOs may not be undertaking many activities and therefore have little interaction with the PO or alternatively, these organizations may be relying on the support from other sources in the region, for example, community elites (tribal heads) and therefore bypass the PO in their operations.

Figure 4 shows that PO involvement tends to be focused on female and mixed TTOs relative to male TTOs. Figure 5, interestingly, highlights a positive relationship between the age of TTO and level of PO involvement. A possible explanation for this pattern could be that younger TTOs may not be undertaking many activities and therefore PO engagement may be limited (as shown in Figure 2) and over time as TTOs conduct more activities, their involvement with their PO increases.

Figure 4

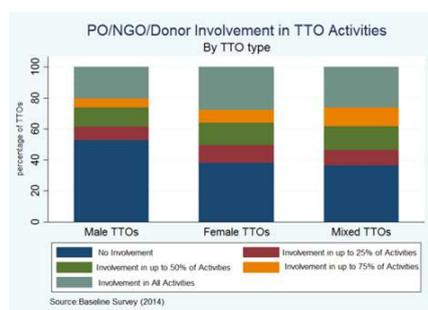
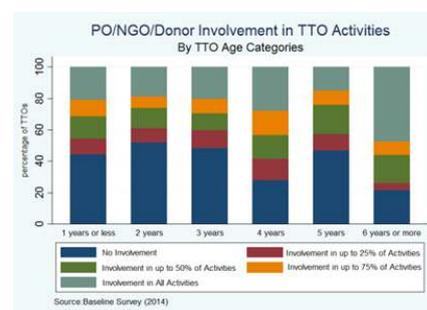


Figure 5



² This refers to the time period August 2013-August 2014



Forms of PO Involvement in TTO activities

The involvement of PO in TTO activities manifests itself in different forms where **funding is the most common form of PO involvement in TTO activities.** Almost 50% of the TTOs reported that they received some funding from their PO to conduct their activities (Figure 6).

Figure 6

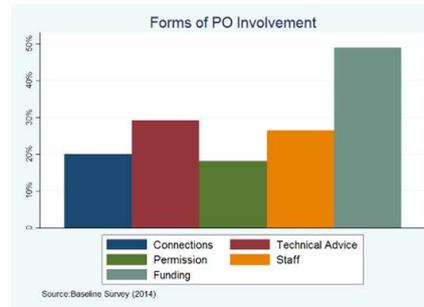
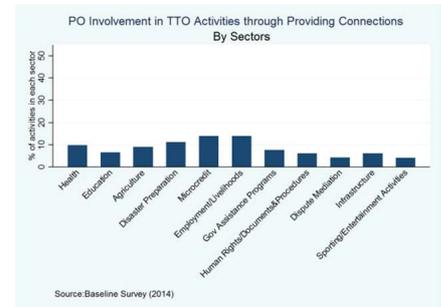


Figure 7



It is encouraging to note that funding is not the only form of engagement of the PO with their TTOs; the POs are also assisting these organizations in developing connections, getting permissions from relevant government departments along with providing technical advice and staff help in undertaking their activities. Depending on how these activities are carried out, these kinds of activities may form an investment in TTO capacity that may help these organizations work more independently in the future.

The form of PO involvement varies across sectors of activities.– PO assistance with connections and technical advice are most common for activities conducted in the microcredit, livelihoods, disaster preparation, agriculture, and health sectors (Figures 7-8).

Besides facilitating the TTOs in establishing connections and providing technical advice, POs are also instrumental in helping the TTOs gain permission from relevant government departments or line agencies. As shown in Figure 9, almost 30% of the microcredit-related activities and almost 20% of activities related to government assistance programs involve the PO in assisting with government permission. The POs also provide their staff to assist TTOs in conducting their activities (Figure 10), for example, SMs and PO staff may conduct or assist in trainings, or the PO could provide an engineer to help design a small infrastructure project.

As seen above in Figure 6, funding is the most common form of PO involvement. Given the inherent nature of these sectors, almost 50% of the activities in the microcredit sector and almost 40% of the activities in the livelihoods sector involve PO funding. However, it is important to highlight here that TTOs are able to conduct several other activities without direct funding from the PO. Some of these activities may have funding from other sources, but some may be carried out without financial inputs. In particular, TTOs do not report PO funding support for local dispute mediation, an activity primarily carried out through volunteer time of the EB members. In addition, a significant proportion of activities in the health and education sector do not involve PO funding. This could include activities like awareness campaigns about various health issues like polio, dengue; facilitating admission of children into schools, increasing awareness about girls' education etc.

Figure 8

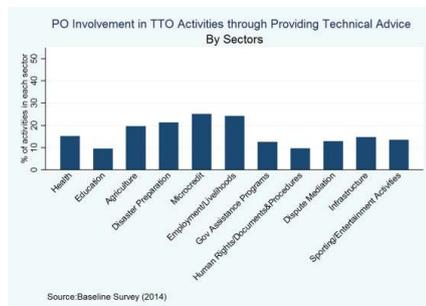


Figure 9

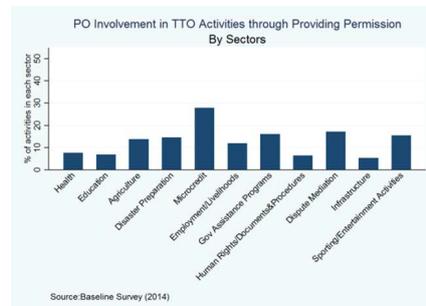
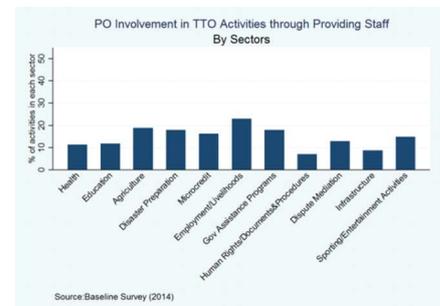


Figure 10





Pos also actively engage with their TTOs by conducting a variety of trainings - another form of active engagement by the PO is through various forms of trainings given to the Executive Body members by the POs. 90% of the TTOs have received some form of training from their PO in the last three years (Figure 12).³ The largest numbers of trainings are conducted for financial management followed by village/UC plan development. On average four EB members attend a training session and PO respondents report that generally participants in these trainings understand the material well.

Figure 11

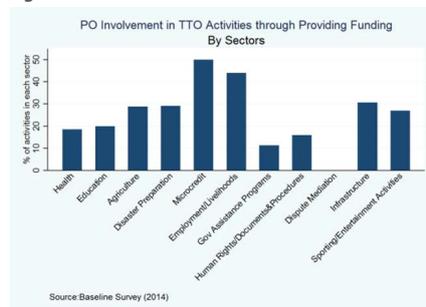


Figure 12



For the remaining 10% of the TTOs have not been given any form of training by their PO in the last three years, it may be that these TTOs are not in need of training, that their members have little interest in participating or face challenges in taking the time and travelling to the training venue, or the PO has limited capacity to conduct trainings in particular regions (security or mobility may be a possible concern). Figure 13 shows that most of the TTOs that have not received any form of training in the last three years are concentrated in the KP region, reinforcing the hypothesis of security or mobility constraints. However, the TTOs that have not received trainings are most likely to be male TTOs (Figure 14); POs appear to be reaching female-only TTOs for training successfully despite the mobility challenges their members might face. It is also interesting to note that there is no significant variation in PO engagement through trainings across different age categories of TTOs (Figure 15⁴), which indicates that POs do not particularly focus on younger or older TTOs for their training activities.

Figure 13

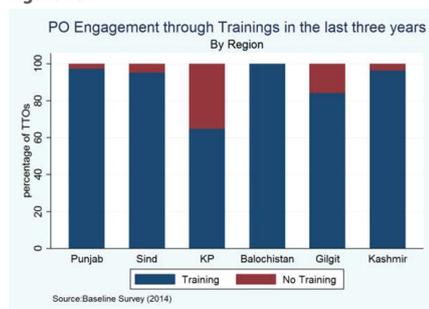


Figure 14

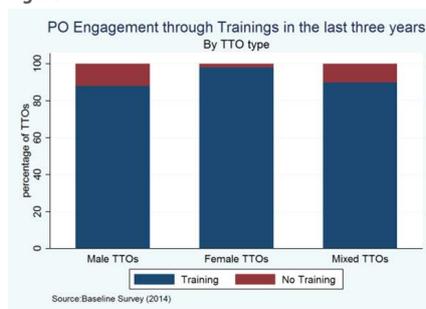


Figure 15



Reporting by TTOs to the PO

TTOs report actively and regularly to their POs, mostly on a monthly basis - Besides the active involvement of POs in TTO activities, the EB members also actively report to their respective PO about their sphere of operations, mostly monthly (Table 2). The EB members not only maintain oral communication with their associated Social Mobilisers and/or PO staff but also prepare and submit written documents like project reports at regular intervals.

³ This refers to the last three years at the time of Survey, i.e. 2011-14.

⁴ Figure 12 excludes TTOs which are less than three years since the question on trainings asked about trainings provided in the last three years.



Table 2 : Frequency of Reporting by TTOs to their PO (% of TTOs)

	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Semiannually	Annually	Never
Written report	4	66	15	9	5	1
Sending resolutions or other documents	9	60	14	9	5	3
Telephonic conversation with SM or PO staff	40	39	13	4	3	1
In-person meeting with SM or PO staff	26	50	17	4	3	0

Frequency of reporting varies considerably across regions as different POs have different reporting requirements from their respective TTOs. As evident across figures 16-19, there are significant regional patterns in reporting frequency and this also

varies with the form of reporting. TTOs located in Punjab mostly send written reports and documents to their POs on a monthly basis, while engaging in telephonic conversations with SMs or PO staff on a weekly basis and having in-person meetings either weekly or monthly. This is in sharp contrast to TTOs located in, for example the Gilgit region, which report less frequently, submitting written reports to their PO either quarterly or annually and meeting or speaking with PO staff either monthly or quarterly. It is quite encouraging to note that TTOs across all regions are regularly reporting to their POs (there are hardly any TTOs which are 'never' reporting to their POs). This indicates that the POs are consistently maintaining a link with the organizations that they have helped to develop and nurture.

Figure 16

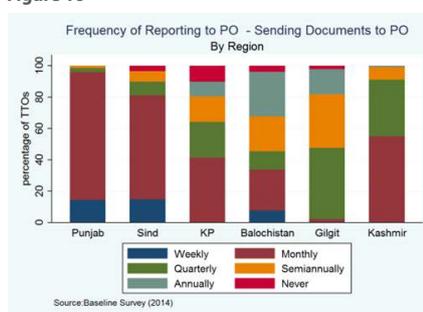


Figure 17

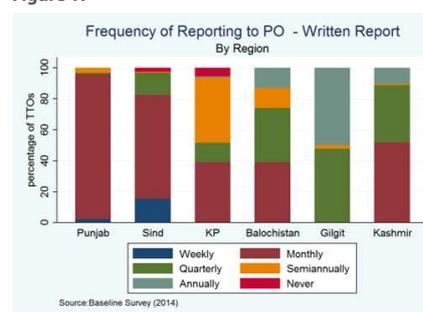


Figure 18

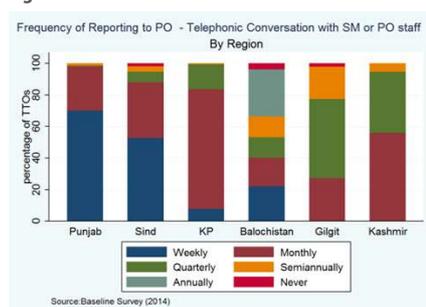
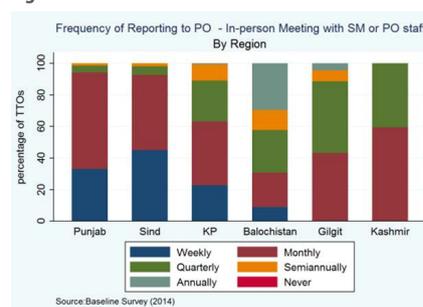


Figure 19





Opinion of PO representatives about TTO performance

PO staff report that TTOs are generally performing well as most of the POs view the overall performance of their TTOs as either being good or best (Figure 20). It is interesting to observe though, that opinion on TTO performance varies across different regions (Figure 21) reflecting the differences in performance standards that POs have from their set of TTOs. It can be seen that the relatively more mature TTOs located in Northern Areas like Kashmir and Gilgit are deemed as relatively less satisfactory in their performance; given that these areas have the longest-established TTOs, this could reflect a higher performance standards that their POs have for them. It must be noted here that these estimates are based on the subjective opinion of the PO representatives and each PO is likely to have a different criteria for good performance. POs view female TTOs (Figure 22) to be performing relatively better than male or mixed TTOs. This may again reflect better performance, but PO respondents may also be taking into account the challenges facing women engaging in public activities in their assessment.

PO staff report that the Executive Body members of TTOs generally possess good skills (Figure 23) but, similar to the variation in opinion on overall performance, opinion on the overall skills of EB members also varies considerably across regions (Figure 24), with POs in KP, Balochistan and Kashmir more likely to highlight limited skills of TTO EB members. POs tend to rate the skills of female-only TTO EB members most highly (Figure 25). Again, these assessments are subjective; in addition to differences in performance assessment by different POs, these differences in opinions are also likely to reflect the differences in average education and skill levels across different communities since these EB members hail from the community which they are representing.

Figure 20

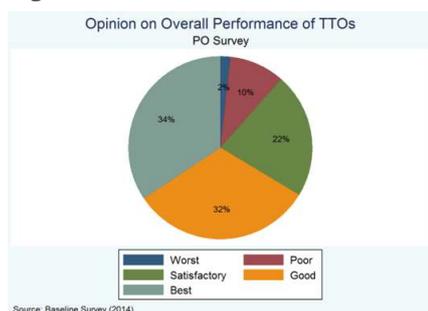


Figure 21

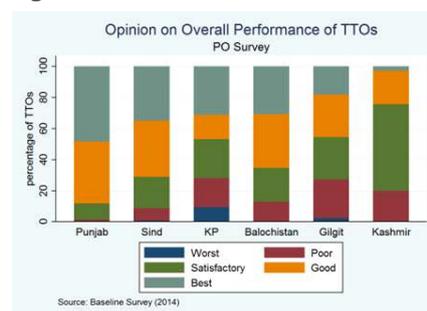


Figure 22

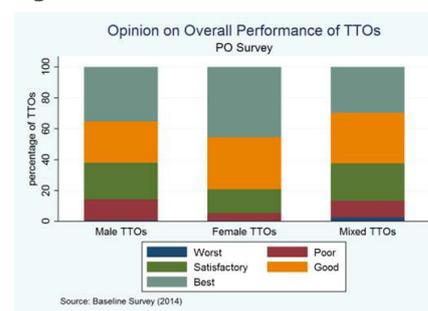


Figure 23

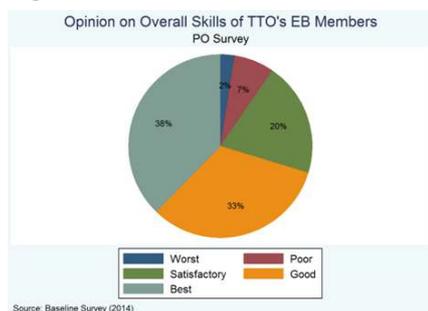


Figure 24

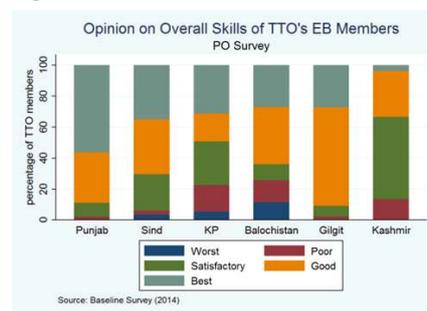
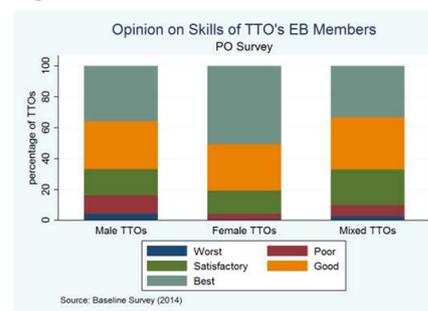


Figure 25



PO staff report that most TTOs are benefiting the most needy in their own community; PO respondents rated 25% of TTOs as "best" and 27% "good" in this respect (Figure 26). However, almost 20% of the TTOs are perceived by their PO to be not performing for the benefit of their people. A closer look reveals that most of these TTOs are concentrated in KP and Balochistan (Figure 27) and are most likely to be male TTOs (Figure 28). This raises questions about how PPAF, POs and TTOs can work together to improve targeting and reduce elite capture.



Figure 26

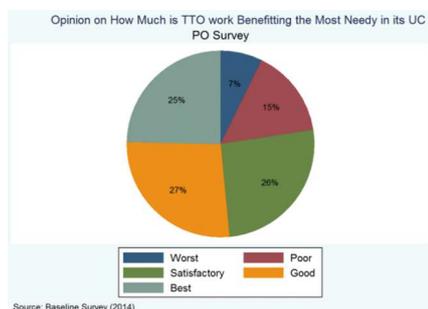


Figure 27

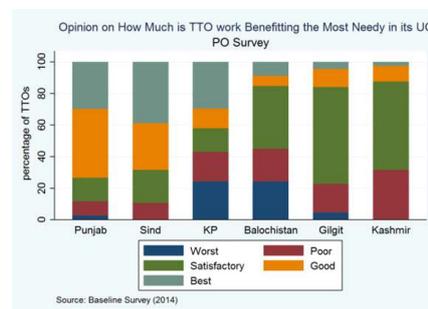
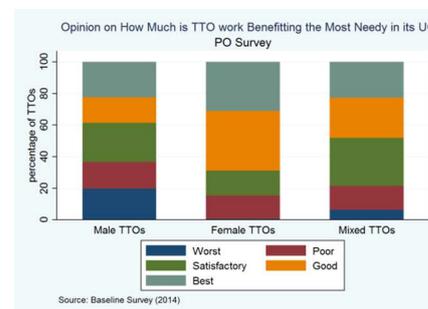


Figure 28



Conclusion

The findings in this brief provide a valuable insight into the relationship between the TTOs with their PO which is one of the most valuable linkages that these TTOs rely upon. It is interesting to observe that this relationship exhibits significant heterogeneity across several dimensions. These differences in the level and form of PO involvement can be useful in shaping the future course of action of the POs as well as PPAF. However, it is important to note here that the findings do not imply any causal relationships, for example, it will not be correct to think that location in a particular region causes greater PO involvement. The findings should rather be interpreted as patterns of involvement with regional location, age and member composition being correlated with level and types of PO involvement. Finally, it is encouraging to observe that POs generally have a very positive opinion about the performance of these community-based organizations as this positivity can ensure a more healthy and productive relationship between the TTOs and their POs in the long run.

Table 1 : List of Partner Organizations (POs)

Partner Organization	Number of TTOs	
	Sampling Frame	Baseline Survey 2014
1 Agha Khan Rural Support Program	59	58
2 Aga Khan Planning & Building Service	2	2
3 AWAZ	8	8
4 Balochistan Rural Support Program	45	37
5 Balochistan Environmental & Educational Journey	3	0
6 Balochistan Rural Development and Research Society	3	0
7 Community Mobilisation and Development Organisation	1	1
8 Environmental Protection Society	2	2
9 Farmers Development Organization	5	5
10 Ghazi Barotha Taraqiyati Idara	8	8
11 Karwan Community Development Organization	3	3
12 National Rural Support Program	615	514
13 Participatory Integrated Development Society	15	7
14 Punjab Rural Support Program	34	23
15 Rural Community Development Society	2	2
16 SERVE D.I.KHAN	1	1
17 Sindh Graduates Association	1	1
18 Sindh Rural Support Organisation	122	93
19 Sarhad Rural Support Programme	110	68
20 SCOPE	1	1
21 Thardeep Rural Development Programme	17	17
Total	1057	851