



Harris Khalique
Chief Executive
(2002-2010)

I feel as much a part of this celebration as the present staff and the current members of the board and the general body. All deserve to be congratulated, those who remained associated with SPO in the past and those who work with it now. We have contributed to creating one of the most outstanding civil society organisations in Pakistan which remains sensitive to the disadvantaged sections of society within its ranks and in the ambit of its work. The communities SPO has strived to serve over the years and the activists in the length and breadth of the country who have worked voluntarily with SPO can claim a larger share in the festivity today.

The donors who have supported this journey also deserve our heartfelt gratification.

SPO stands for the realisation of fundamental rights of people, particularly the women, the minorities, the oppressed and the economically disadvantaged. It has grown into one of the largest - if not the largest - rights-based and humanitarian organisations of Pakistan in terms of scope and outreach. I take pride in contributing to this phenomenal growth of a national civil society organisation which is truly inclusive and pluralistic in character.

In her first 20 years, SPO has come a long way. It has moved from a small projects office in the posh neighborhood of Islamabad to a position of exercising thought leadership on the paramount challenges of our time: helping communities take charge of their lives by organizing themselves and negotiating their rights. This is an extraordinary responsibility. This twenty-year journey has lessons for us all: how best can civil society engage with policy makers at various tiers of governance. Pioneering transformational leadership has never been an easy challenge and SPO has never shied away for this challenge. The history of community development in Pakistan cannot be written without referring to the work and approaches tested and pioneered by SPO.

LEAD Pakistan and SPO share many core values and commitments. We have grown together in the last 20 years and we are poised to work together during the next 20 year and beyond. This occasion is an opportunity for us to reaffirm our resolve to support the inspirational leadership of SPO.



Ali T. Skhelkh
Director
Asia Climate &
Development
Knowledge
Network (CDKN)
&
Chief Executive Officer
LEAD Pakistan



Dr. Suleman Shalkh
Ex Chief Executive

5th March 2014
Karachi

April 1993, I joined as Additional Director Pakistan Canada Small Project Office (SPO), CIDA the support agency of SPO decided to indigenise SPO as national organization. The bilateral project was to be registered as not for profit company under companies Act 1984. Mr. Ralph Mc Kim Director SPO and Dr. Azam Legal Adviser were working on this transformation. I was hired to support the activity. The job was completed in January 1994 when we got registration. The Secretary Economic Affairs and Secretary Finance Government of Pakistan were very supportive.

First week of February the first meeting of SPO Board of Directors was convened and I had the honour to be selected as First CEO of Strengthening Participatory Organizations (SPO). SPO focused itself to the capacity building of Community based organizations CBOs in Rural Pakistan. In my tenure of around 58 months I had a very pleasant experience to work with rural population across Pakistan. These are the real stakeholders of Pakistan and deserve all attention and support.

I salute them for their eagerness to work diligently for social development.

All field workers of SPO are valuable asset of Pakistan. May Allah Bless you All.

It has been a pleasure to ride along with the SPO caravan for part of this journey to adolescence. It is a pleasure to see the network of dedicated professionals and more over 'workers' throughout Pakistan, including some of the most delicate areas. At the same time the stimulating and necessary debate initiated by SPO at many fronts are so much necessary.

For the Spate Irrigation Network we feel so honoured and strengthened at being hosted in your organization and we to pursue the travel and travail together.

Frank van Steenberg
Spate Irrigation
Network



Ali Akbar
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I wish SPO even greater success as it strives towards its half century.

Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO)

SPO is a leading rights-based civil society organization with its Citizens Voice and Accountability (CVA) initiative being implemented in over 75 districts of the country. SPO's focus mainly being on state and citizens engagement for strengthening democratic norms, systems and institutions to secure social justice and peace and harmony, and eradicate conflicts, poverty and gender-inequalities, works with over 3500 countrywide civil society entities comprising human rights, women, minority and youth activists, organizations and networks, mainstream political parties, labour organizations, trade unions, teachers and media associations, intelligentsia, and policy-makers at provincial and national levels.

Understanding the gravity of critical emergency situations that target communities have to live in intermittently, SPO also deals with humanitarian emergencies resulting from natural and human-induced hazards such as the earthquakes, rain-fed floods and cyclones and internal displacement of communities triggered by conflicts.

UDHR and other international human rights covenants are central to SPO's program philosophy.

Currently, major components of SPO's CVA initiative are supported by BHC and DFID. SPO acknowledges other donors support as well.



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Testimonials



Dr Katja Jobes
Senior Social
Development
Adviser
Team Leader,
Democracy and
Accountability
DFID Pakistan

Strengthening Participatory Organization began its life in the early 1990s as the Small Projects Office (SPO) of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) programme in Pakistan. In 1994, the Small Projects Office was transformed into an indigenous NGO, with a mandate to support community organizations and public interest institutions to promote democratic governance, social justice, peace and social harmony.

Over the last 20 years, SPO has grown from strength to strength transforming itself into one of Pakistan's leading rights-based CSOs. Setting an example for others to follow, it has played a pivotal role in mainstreaming a rights-based agenda within Pakistan's civil society. SPO has worked tirelessly to champion women's rights and has helped raise the voices of religious minorities and other disenfranchised/marginalized segments of society working with over 300 Community Based Organisations and Women's Organisations. With its unique outreach at the grassroots level and a footprint in more than 75 districts, SPO works with communities in some of the remotest parts of Pakistan, often under difficult circumstances, consistently challenging social injustice.

This is why, with all its grassroots experience, networks, and quality performance, SPO is one of the key partners of the DFID-funded Awaz programme - a programme which is working with marginalised women and men and their communities to support more open, inclusive and accountable democratic processes. This is why DFID is pleased to be celebrating SPO's 20th anniversary. We recognise and celebrate the important work SPO and its partners have been doing to make Pakistan a safer, more accountable and inclusive society.

Canada is proud to have played a key role in the inception of Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) which started out as a Canada-Pakistan bilateral project in 1989, transformed itself into an indigenous NGO in 1994, and has since evolved into one of the largest rights-based national support organizations in Pakistan with an estimated 350 employees and 3,500 partner organizations across Pakistan.

It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate SPO on completing 20 years of advocating for democratic governance, social justice, peace & social harmony and deepening the bonds of friendship between Canada and Pakistan. I would like to thank SPO's management, employees, volunteers and partners for their diligence, commitment and focused efforts to make SPO a success story and to enhance social development across Pakistan.



H.E. Mr. Greg Giokas
Canadian High
Commissioner to
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Testimonials

Strengthening Participatory Organization On behalf of IUCN Pakistan, and on my personal behalf, I would like to congratulate Mr. Naseer Memon, Chief Executive, and the Board of Directors of SPO on achieving this important milestone.

Today, SPO stands tall amongst the leading non-governmental organizations of Pakistan. Its long journey of 20 years reflects the hard work and dedication of its team, and the foresightedness of its board members. SPO's tireless pursuit in the areas of human rights, minorities, governance, justice, peace & harmony, and environment has been exemplary over the last several years now.

SPO's work has spanned the entire country, from Azad Jammu and Kashmir to Karachi, which is a constant reaffirmation of the worth and credibility the organization enjoys. IUCN is privileged to have SPO as a member since 1994, the then Chief Executive Officer of SPO, Mr. Ali Akbar, was elected as a Regional Councilor and became part of the IUCN Council at the global level (2001-2004) and also served as Chair of the IUCN's Pakistan National Committee in 2001-2003.

Similarly, in the recent past, Mr. Naseer Memon remained a member of the Executive Committee of IUCN Pakistan National Committee, and provided valuable inputs and insights into the Committee affairs. IUCN Pakistan greatly values SPO as an IUCN member organization, in which it sees a highly credible partner and a friend with a common vision.

SPO is a success story and we look forward to work together in the best interest of our organizations.



**Mahmood Akhtar
Cheema**
Country Representative
IUCN Pakistan

M. Saeed Aleem
National Disaster
Management Authority
(NDMA)

It gives me immense pleasure to extend my heartiest felicitations to SPO on completion of its 20 years. The contribution made by the organization to strengthen and support the underprivileged section of society deserves appreciation. The resolve to meet the challenges in the disaster preparedness and response activities to alleviate the suffering of affectees is a noble cause and a source of inspiration and motivation for other organizations too. Indeed, such a commitment is a manifestation of strong sense of humanity.

NDMA assures SPO of whole hearted support in all its endeavors in the field of disaster preparedness and response.

I hope that SPO would continue its efforts with the same zeal and enthusiasm in future as well.

Testimonials

Each human rights activist, indeed every citizen committed to social progress, should like to join the courageous people working for SPO in celebrating the completion of 20 years of their organisation's existence. SPO, one of the most outstanding civil society organizations of Pakistan, has an enviable record of accomplishments. It has covered its fairly broad mandate with distinction. Particularly praise worthy have been its efforts at promoting a meaningful discourse on issues of vital concern to the people, its success in extending succor to people affected by disasters, and its ability to train a cadre of committed activists who have been trying to excel themselves year after year.

Many happy returns of the day, friends at SPO, and may you register greater achievements in the decades to come.



I. A. Rehman



Dr. Sikandar Mandhro
Minister for
Parliamentary Affairs,
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Coastal Development
Authority,
Govt. of Sindh

I congratulate SPO on completion of its 20 years. Over the years SPO has proved its worth as a strong civil society organization. Its contribution for good governance and human rights agenda has created visible impact. Our experience with SPO had been very productive and useful. SPO has been facilitating Government of Sindh in pro-people legislation for improved governance in Sindh province.

Stakeholders' consultations and roundtable forums convened by SPO on various issues pertaining to governance had been beneficial for a shared vision of good governance. Our ministry/department values this cherished partnership.



Arif Jabbar Khan
Country Director,
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It is an honour for me to celebrate 20 years successful journey of SPO and to congratulate the SPO team and Board of Directors for achieving this significant milestone in their institutional history. SPO has emerged as one of the influential and credible national civil society organizations despite the many challenges that we face in our context. It has strengthened its internal institutional base, deepened and expanded its thematic and geographical outreach with national civil society organizations and communities across the Pakistan.

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Neva Khan
Country Director,
VSO

I have had associations with SPO since 2009. Our relationship has been one of SPO being an implementing partner up until 2012; and more as collaborators and colleagues in the humanitarian and development sector thereafter. During all my interactions with SPO staff and particularly their Chief Executive, Naseer Memon, I have found SPO to be professional, engaging and committed to upholding the rights of all Pakistan's people. I have been particularly impressed by the wide range of humanitarian and development issues on which they advocate tirelessly, their geographical reach, and the growing number of strategic partnerships they have formalised with government and non-government actors. SPO has made a significant positive difference in the lives of Pakistan's people during the last 25 years, often in very difficult operational environments. Given the many complex challenges that Pakistan faces, it will be essential for SPO to continue to do so! I congratulate SPO on its 20 years of achievements and look forward to our continued formal and informal collaborations in the years ahead.

Oxfam and SPO have partnered on the basis of mutual respect, accountability, equality and transparency. Over the years our partnership has strengthened and has contributed to bringing about positive changes in the lives of poor women and men. We work closely on several development issues, including on women rights, humanitarian preparedness and response, essential services etc, both at programmatic and policy advocacy levels.

I wish more successes to SPO in future and look forward to our continued partnership!

SPO has fostered a movement of civil society organizations, human rights and grass roots level community organizations implementing community development projects, conducting research and lobbying policy makers, enabling citizens to affect policy change and pave the way for building a democratic, just and tolerant society.

For the last two decades, SPO has worked to create an enabling environment for participatory governance and sustainable collective action aimed at enhancing resilience of economically vulnerable communities, preventing social unrest, and assisting communities faced with natural disasters. Its response to the 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods was effective and unmatched.

We congratulate SPO on completing two decades of admirable struggle for citizen rights and development.



Sandra Houston
Pakistan Senior
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