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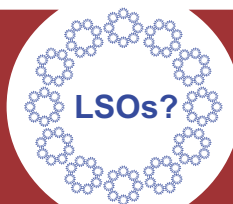
Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme

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An update on the work of Local Support Organisations



What are LSOs?

LSOs or Local Support Organisations are central to the 'Social Mobilisation' approach of the Rural Support Programmes (RSPs). In a bid to reduce poverty and empower marginalised people (especially women), the RSPs under SUCCESS, mobilise rural women into a three-tiered structure, which consists of Community Organisations (COs) - neighbourhood level community groups, Village Organisations (VOs) - village level federations of COs, and LSOs - union council level federations of VOs. LSOs are able to carry out community-led development at a much greater level due to the advantage they gain from numbers. As the tertiary tier, LSOs are also uniquely able to develop linkages with government and non-government organisations, donor agencies and the private sector.

LSO Initiatives

LSO SATH, LARKANA

District  Larkana	Union Council  Tayab	Date of Formation  July 27 2017	Total Households in Union Council  1,755	Organised Households  1,356
Coverage  77%	Number of Community Organisations (COs)  62 (all women's)	Number of Village Organisations (VOs)  10 (all women's)	Number of General Body Members  20 (all women)	Number of Executive Committee Members  7 (all women)

(LSO Profile as of 31 December 2019)

LSO Sath, from District Larkana was formed in July 2017 by 1,356 member households organised in 62 COs and 10 VOs. Women leaders of LSO Sath are planning and executing development activities both on self-help basis as well as in collaboration with government agencies. EU-funded SUCCESS programme is empowering rural women in Sindh through realising the power they gain from collective action. The organised women now are gaining awareness about their rights and making the service providers accountable and also taking self-initiatives to improve their lives.

Awareness Raising on Rights of Women and Education for Children

The women of UC Tayab unlocked their own potential as active citizens toward their own development by organising into community institutions, under the EU-funded SUCCESS programme in 2017. As they organised into COs, VOs and an LSO, they received awareness sessions by their Community Resource Persons (CRPs), Social Organisers (SOs) and other staff members of the SUCCESS programme on various socio-economic development themes. They were enabled to take up roles and



Awareness Raising Workshop on Rights of Women and Education of Children

responsibilities in bringing positive changes in their lives and the society at large. In August 2018, the leaders of LSO Sath organised a one-day workshop to raise awareness about women's rights and the importance of education for children in the local community. The LSO sent invitation letters to all VO leaders of UC Tayab, as well as VO leaders of neighbouring UCs (Lashari, Jeejal and Maseeha). They also invited headmasters of public schools, the Lady Health Visitor, Chairman of the UC and other local dignitaries in the

awareness session. Over 100 women and men participated in the workshop.

In this workshop, many speakers reiterated the rights of women and importance of women empowerment in community development. The speakers stressed that women empowerment not only enhances both the quality and quantity of human resources available for community development, it is also vital for addressing human rights' concerns. Moreover, the awareness session emphasised the utmost importance of education for both girls and boys. Speakers spoke about the necessity of enrolling all school-aged children in order to improve individual and communal circumstances. LSO Sath also ensured children's participation in the event as they sang national and religious songs and highlighted the importance of education through tableaux. As a result of this workshop, the headmasters of government schools extended their support in school enrolment drives. So far, about 410 out of school girls and boys have been enrolled in schools.

Activating the School Management Committees

School Management Committees (SMCs) can play a strategic role in improving the quality of education of children provided that they function responsibly. Unfortunately, this is not the case for most SMCs. Realising the importance of the SMCs, the women leaders of LSO Sath decided to take action. They included active VO members in the committees to make them effective and functional. The committee oversees regular attendance of teachers and students and plans to utilise the government funds of the SMCs for repair and maintenance of the schools. The LSO leaders have so far revamped and activated the SMCs of four government schools out of 22 and are eagerly organising the remaining ones on an urgent basis.

Addressing the Burning Issue of Pollution

Rural poverty in Sindh is deeply rooted in ill health; a main source of disease is the lack of proper sanitation and sewerage systems. In UC Tayab, the drainage lines along the roads and streets had been polluting the area and spreading different diseases like malaria, diarrhoea and various gastrointestinal disorders. In the absence of a functioning waste management system, people disposed of garbage in the drainage lines, causing blockage and accumulation of dirty water in the streets. These collections of sewerage water were breeding grounds for mosquitoes and bacteria. The LSO leaders made special committees in each VO responsible for ensuring the cleaning of drainage lines every month. The committee asked the residents to refrain from throwing household waste in drainage lines, however, this garbage was piling up at the roadsides. The LSO leaders then approached the UC Chairman and asked him to make an official request to the municipal authorities at the Taluka level for disposing of the garbage from roadsides. Now the municipal authorities clean the drainage lines on a monthly basis. Due to the proactive LSO members from Sath, the villages of UC Tayab are significantly cleaner, leading to a healthier living environment for the villagers.

In addition to improving the sanitation system in the area, the LSO leaders decided to further improve the living conditions by tree plantations. Due to the various communal benefits of trees, they organised a campaign for tree plantation at UC level and planted 3,000 plants. SRSO provided 1,000 plants to the LSO while the LSO members bought 2,000 additional plants at 15 rupees per plant. They expect that once the trees are fully grown, they will reduce heat, improve air and soil quality and provide timber.



Support to Poorest Families

Like others, the main objective of LSO Sath is poverty reduction. There are many disadvantaged households that lack the resources to fulfil even their physiological needs. The LSO members brainstormed to raise funds and support these families. They celebrate Eid Milad-un-Nabi (Birth Anniversary of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him) and highlighted the importance of supporting the poorest members of the society and helping each other. During the Milad, they are able to raise funds through donations and distribute amongst the poorest households.

The LSO leaders were also eager to invest in clean and affordable energy for the poorest families in the UC. They learnt that the UC Chairman had funds to set up solar panels for clean electricity for poor families, so they prepared a list of 120 deserving families. Of these, the UC Chairman provided solar panels to 10 families and promised to provide panels to the remaining families when he would receive funds in future.



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