

# LSO Initiatives

## LSO Sindh Sujag

District:	Shikarpur
Union Council:	Rostam
Date of Formation:	22 December, 2011
Total Households in Union Council:	2,645
Organised Households:	2,093
Coverage:	79%
No of Community Organisations (COs):	130 (All women)
No of Village Organisations (VOs):	32 (All women)
No of General Body Members:	50 (All women)
No of Executive Committee Members:	11 (All women)

### Re-opening of Closed Government Schools

During a monthly meeting of the LSO, its member VOs reported that 5 government primary schools were closed due to lack of interest of their teachers. The LSO leaders visited these schools and found that most of them have been closed for the last three years. These are single teacher schools, where both girls and boys study up to Class 5. The LSO leaders held a meeting with the teachers and warned them to re-open the schools immediately or the LSO would file a complaint with the Education Department. The teachers immediately re-opened the schools and within a short time, 295 students were enrolled in these schools.



### 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 mobilise rural communities 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 VO. 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, donors agencies and the private sector.

## Value-Chain Development for Women Entrepreneurs

A large number of women in the union council had received training by SRSO and other NGOs on how to make different handicraft products. After their training these women used to sell their handicrafts to locals or small shopkeepers in the area at very low prices, earning little or no profit. After formation of the LSO, the women raised this issue with SRSO. SRSO helped the LSO organise 172 artisan women into 7 groups and link them with the main Sukkur city market. Now the artisan groups receive orders for various handicraft items on a regular basis. They produce the artifacts in a group, take quality control measures and supply the finished goods to vendors. Now that they have been linked to the market, they now receive three times more profit for their work.



Clothes and handicrafts made by female artisans

## Construction of Protective Structure

The residents of village Muhammad Ibrahim raised a complaint with their LSO that during the paddy cultivation season, water from paddy fields flows down to their village, spreading dirt and causing serious health problems for the villagers. The VO asked the LSO to help them to construct a protective structure around the village to divert the water towards open spaces and away from the village. The LSO offered to contribute fifty percent cost of the protective structure if the VO would pay the other half. The total cost of the project was Rs. 60,000, half of which was paid by the VO from their savings. The General Body members of the LSO contributed the remaining Rs. 30,000 from

their own pocket and completed the project. The residents of village Muhammad Ibrahim are now fully protected from the paddy field water.



Protective structure constructed by VO & LSO

## Coordination with Donors

Owing to the hard work and commitment that the LSO has shown the people of the union council it represents, the LSO has won their confidence and respect. Thus, the LSO is regularly approached by other NGOs, who are increasingly using them to implement their projects in UC Rostam. For instance, Save The Children was working in the LSO's area. However, due to their limited outreach, the NGO was facing problems in identifying high-impact projects and in targeting deserving persons. Upon learning about the LSO, the NGO had a meeting with its leaders and decided to initiate only those projects which were recommended by the LSO. Moreover, the NGO began providing family planning services for women referred to them by the LSO. So far, the NGO has started three infrastructure schemes of link roads and street pavements. Sixty families have been trained and provided with supplies for kitchen gardening and 7 women have received family planning services this month.

Another NGO that the LSO supported was the Hidayat Trust, Shikarpur, which provides financial support to poor families in the marriage of their daughters. The Trust now supports only those families recommended by the LSO. The poor families approach the LSO, which then verifies the actual needs of the family and makes a recommendation to the Trust. The Trust pays up to Rs. 25,000 to the poor family for purchase of dowry.