



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 Sarwan, Larkana

District  Larkana	Union Council  Mitho Dero	Date of Formation  2017	Total Households in Union Council  2,970	Organised Households  2,222	Coverage  75%
	Number of Community Organisations (COs)  114 (all women's)	Number of Village Organisations (VOs)  15 (all women's)	Number of General Body Members  30 (all women)	Number of Executive Committee Members  7 (all women)	

(LSO Profile as of September 2018)

LSO Sarwan from District Larkana was formed in June 2017 by 2,222 member households organised in 114 COs and 15 VOs. Women leaders of LSO Sarwan 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.

Utilisation of Savings of Member COs in Local Enterprise Development

Community Organisation members work very hard to save money through their work and during their meetings. Savings are kept with their Manager or the President, since access to banks is extremely limited due to strict State Bank rules. Realising the risks associated with unsecured savings, the LSO leaders decided to use it for promotion of micro-enterprises for the poorest members. On the



Qinqui Rickshaw purchased through internal lending from CO savings

instruction of the LSO, VO leaders identify potential members who have demonstrated ability to start a new micro-business or expand existing businesses. COs then provide interest-free loans to these people from their savings. If CO savings are not sufficient to finance the micro-business, the VO asks some other member COs to loan to the member from their savings on the social collateral of VO leaders.

So far, they have provided loans to 50 members. The VO oversees the businesses of the borrowers and provides guidance on needs basis. The VO also ensures timely repayment of loan instalments. Thus far, the recovery rate has been satisfactory. The repayment schedule differs according to the business plan of the income generating activity of the member. Those who earn on daily or monthly basis make repayments in instalments. Those who have taken loans for agricultural purposes repay during harvest time. Examples include Rs. 5,000 loan to two poor members for the purchase of carts to sell vegetables and kulfis respectively as street hawkers; Rs. 20,000 for purchase of a Qinqi Rickshaw (who repaid the entire amount on time in the shape of Rs. 3,000 monthly instalments) and Rs. 3,000 to a member to repair a donkey cart. Over Rs. 200,000 has been given by the member VOs of the LSO. Apart from its economic gains to the poor families, the activity strengthens the three-tier structure of CO/VO/LSO by providing them opportunities to interact and collaborate with each other.

Campaign to Vaccinate Children and Pregnant Women and Adopt Birth Spacing by Women

Before the formation of LSO Sarwan, the people of UC Mitho Dero were reluctant to vaccinate their children and pregnant women because they were not aware of its importance, or were exposed to misconceptions against vaccinations. Similarly, few women were informed of birth spacing facilities available in government health centres. They learnt about these services during community awareness sessions conducted by Community Resource Persons (CRPs) under the EU supported SUCCESS programme. The women leaders of LSO Sarwan launched village-wide campaigns to maximise vaccinations. First, they prepared lists of pregnant women and children in each village via their VO leaders. They then asked these women to ensure they and their families receive the required vaccinations. This way, the VOs achieved 100% vaccination coverage in a short period of time. They also motivated women in the fertility age range to adopt birth spacing practices and avoid unplanned pregnancies. This would allow them to raise their children well and enjoy healthy lives themselves. Over 400 women reported practicing birth spacing practices after attending sessions by LSO leaders.

Collaboration with SIAPEP for Enhancement of Agricultural Production

The Government of Sindh has launched the 'Sindh Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Enhancement Project' (SIAPEP) with assistance from the World Bank. The aim of this project is to improve agricultural productivity among small and medium farmers. Leaders from LSO Sarwan were contacted by SIAPEP officials to seek their collaboration to reach poor vegetable farmers; the intervention had the potential to increase their yield multiple times its current level. The LSO recommended Village Pir Jo Goth for the

activity based on their poverty level, their potential and suitability to the project activities and objectives. The SIAPEP staff surveyed 13 of the poorest families in the village and selected 8 families based on their project criteria. They provided vegetable cultivation training and inputs including seeds on half acre portion of land. Beneficiary families prepared the land and cultivated vegetable seeds using specialised methods they had been trained in earlier. Women for LSO Sarwan now monitor the project activities and report progress to SIAPEP. Results of the project, thus far, have been very encouraging. Beneficiaries were not only able to consume fresh vegetables at home, but were also able to sell surplus produce in local markets. Beneficiary households reported that they earned around Rs. 20,000 on average from the activity. The LSO is planning to expand the model to as many poor families involved in vegetable cultivation as possible. They have planned to support around 100 families across five villages during the next vegetable cultivation season.

Increasing Coverage of Poorest Families

LSO leaders learned that around 150 of the poorest families in their UC were reluctant to partake in socially mobilisation and join the LSO. They had various doubts about the programme – for example they feared that the programme staff would take loans in their names and they would be forced to pay them back. The LSO leaders invited these women to attend CO and VO meetings and observe the activities of the organisations. They were given briefing on the aim, objectives and working methods of the programme during these meetings. Around 50 of these families eventually joined COs due to all these efforts. The LSO leaders are determined to motivate all such families and get them organised. These families would benefit from the development activities under the SUCCESS programme as well as those activities which are planned and implemented on self-help basis by the communities themselves.



LSO General Body members holding their meeting



"This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union"

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Acknowledgement: Hamid Ali Magsi, DM Larkana, SRSO
Designed & Printed by: Masha ALLAH Printers, Islamabad

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