

# LSO Initiatives

## Al-Karim Development Organisation



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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 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 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.

### Institutional Development

The Local Support Organisation (LSO) is the umbrella organization of Village Organizations and Women Organizations (V/WOs). Since the V/WOs are the foundations of the LSO, their organisational health and strengths have lasting impacts on the LSO. Therefore, the LSO strives continuously to improve the organizational strength of the V/WOs. Right after its formation, the Al-Karim LSO supported the weaker and dormant V/WOs in resolving their conflicts and disputes, auditing their savings and credit operations, and regularizing their meetings and savings. The LSO organized training sessions for 20 men and 22 women in auditing V/WO savings. As such, 15 VOs and 22 WOs were fully revitalized. The LSO staff and board members visit the V/WOs on need basis and evaluate their progress. The LSO conducts audit of V/WO accounts on annual basis and the audit reports are shared with the members in V/WOs meeting. Recently, the LSO has started monthly meeting of V/WOs managers in LSO office to share experiences and ideas with one another and get help in terms of record keeping and other procedures. The members of V/WOs contribute Rs. 5 per month towards the LSO fund.

<b>Date of Formation:</b> <b>15 February, 2005</b>			
<b>District:</b> <b>Ghizer</b>		<b>Union Council:</b> <b>Taus, Tehsil Yasin</b>	
<b>Total Households in Union Council:</b> <b>1,702</b>	<b>Organised Households:</b> <b>1,447</b>	<b>Coverage:</b> <b>85%</b>	
<b>No. of Village Organisations (VOs):</b> <b>37</b> 22 women's	<b>No. of other Civil Society Organisations:</b> <b>5</b>	<b>No. of General Body Members:</b> <b>42</b> 22 women's	<b>No. of Executive Committee Members:</b> <b>14</b> 6 women's



The Al-Karim LSO keeps updated financial and non-financial records. Its accounts are audited regularly on annual basis. It has developed a five-year development plan and shares progress on it regularly with all stakeholders. It has been generating resources from various internal and external sources to finance its operational expenses. Due to these and similar other healthy institutional indicators, the LSO scored 814 marks out of 1,000 and has been ranked in the 'A Category' by Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) under the LSO Assessment exercise carried out in April 2016.

## Youth Development

Experience has proved that youth development results in positive effects on their behaviors and skills including self-efficacy, self-determination, communication, and problem-solving. Therefore, youth development is one of the main development agenda of the LSO. With technical and financial support of AKRSP, the LSO has conducted numerous exploratory meetings and workshops with youth and other stakeholders in order to identify and prioritize the challenges of young men and women of the area. The LSO then developed a five-year Youth Development Plan (2013 – 2017) in a participatory manner.



A key priority component of the Youth Development Plan is making maximum young men and women members of VOs and WOs. Accordingly, the number of young members has increased from 20% to 54% over the last three years. Employment generation has been another key component of the Plan. In this respect, the LSO has arranged capacity building activities for the youth in business development, fruit processing, painting, tailoring, mobile repair, electrician, beautician and hotel management etc. Moreover, the LSO established a Youth Resource Centre equipped with a computer lab and training facilities in various vocational skills. The Centre also provides youth with information about jobs available in the market. Over 75% trained youth reported that the employment generation efforts have helped them starting their small scale income earning undertakings, as well as getting them jobs in the local market. Addiction to various types of drugs is steadily increasing among the youth. The LSO, therefore, arranges awareness campaigns against drug abuse and motivates the youth to engage in healthy activities, like sports.

These integrated youth development efforts of the LSO are not only positively impacting personal growth of the beneficiary young men and women, but also yielding socio-economic dividends to their families and the local society at large.

## Collaboration with government and other organisations

One of the main functions of the LSO is creating development linkages with government and non-government organisations to be able to make resources accessible and available for the local communities. The Al-Karim LSO has been successful in establishing linkages with: 1) Forest Department District Ghizer for planting forest trees, 2) Agriculture Department Dist. Ghizer for distributing wheat seed among farmers and arranging training for the progressive farmers on fruit harvesting and processing and distribution of fruit tree management kits, 3) Environmental Protection Agency Govt. of Gilgit-Baltistan for tree plantation and training of local farmers in forestry, 4) Population Welfare Department Dist. Ghizer for organizing awareness raising programmes about family planning, 5) TB-Control-ACSM Project for awareness raising workshop and community events about TB diseases, 6) Women Ministry Islamabad Govt. of Pakistan to implement a project on empowering local women political leaders, 7) First Micro Health Insurance Agency for facilitating Family Group Health Insurance to interested members, 8) Pakistan Baitul Mal for providing financial support to needy families, 9) PCSIR for Fruit Processing Training, 10) LG&RD for construction of hall for the LSO Office, 11) FMFB for facilitating loan to local entrepreneurs, 12) AKEPB for organizing Business Training to local entrepreneurs, and 13) JICA for production, harvesting and marketing of high quality apple. As a results of these efforts, huge investments have been made in the development of the area resulting in steady improvements in the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiary members.



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