

# LSO Initiatives

## LSO Narian, AJK



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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.

### Community Physical Infrastructure Projects

The LSO has effectively established linkages with government and other development agencies to access resources for construction of physical infrastructures. So far, the LSO has successfully completed 15 drinking water supply schemes, 100 hand pumps, 15 foot bridges, 20 foot paths, 30 link roads, 5 water reservoirs, 10 water tanks, 4 community centres and 5 waiting spaces at bus stops.



A Foot Bridge completed with EU funding

<b>Date of Formation:</b> <b>28 August, 2008</b>			
<b>District:</b> <b>Sudhnoti</b>		<b>Union Council:</b> <b>Narian Sharif</b>	
<b>Total Households in Union Council:</b> <b>2,681</b>	<b>Organised Households:</b> <b>1,931</b>	<b>Coverage:</b> <b>72%</b>	
<b>No. of Community Organisations (COs):</b> <b>125</b> 47 women's	<b>No. of Village Organisations (VOs):</b> <b>5</b> all mixed	<b>No. of General Body Members:</b> <b>35</b> 15 women	<b>No. of Executive Committee Members:</b> <b>15</b> 6 women



Foot Bridge and Bus Stop constructed with EU financial support

Recently, the LSO has completed two foot-bridges and a waiting space at a very busy bus stop with financial support of European Union. The two foot bridges serve 150 families of the surrounding villages. The beneficiary communities regularly maintain the completed schemes.

### Increase Household Coverage

Before the formation of the LSO, only 33% of the area's households were organised. The LSO hired seven CRPs, (5 women and 2 men) and within six months they increased the household coverage to 70% by organising 940 additional households in 59 new COs (15 men, 41 women and 3 mixed). Moreover, they re-activated a number of dormant COs and updated their records. NRSP provided honorarium to the CRPs and trained them in scaling up social mobilization while the LSO leaders managed and supervised the entire project. The LSO also trained 100 CO leaders (70 women and 30 men) in Community Management Skills Training (CMST) and provided them the required skills and exposure to manage the CO effectively.



LSO leaders meeting with VO/CO members at village Budhani Bari

The LSO has carried out a Poverty Scorecard survey of the entire Union Council. According to the survey, the number of poor households in the UC is 1,468, out of which 1,192 (81%) households have already been organised into men, women and mixed COs and are member of the LSO. The LSO is trying to organise the remaining households into COs.

### Conservation of Natural Forest

Four out of the five villages in the UC have natural forest. The local people are allowed to cut dead and fallen trees as well as green trees for local usage, like construction of houses, after paying a nominal fee to the government Forest Department. However, timber mafia was using this provision for cutting green trees on large scale and depleting the natural endowment, in collusion with some corrupt officials within the Forest Department. After the LSO was formed, its leaders discussed the issue with the Forest Department and resolved to form Community Forest Committees in all four VOs. The Committees are registered with the Forest Department. They monitor illegal cutting of trees and immediately report illegal incidents to the Forest Department for timely action. Whenever local families need timber, they first put up their request to the Community Forest Committee. The Committee considers their request and recommend to the Forest Department for the number of trees according to their actual needs. The Forest Department accepts their recommendations. In this way, the LSO has controlled illegal and indiscriminate felling of trees and protected their natural environment from potential disasters.

### Dispute Resolution through Local Committees

The legal system of our country is faced with many challenges. It takes our courts years to decide a criminal case. Many cases run for generations without conclusion, and the parties ultimately decide to settle the issue on their own, outside the courts. Accusations of bribery and nepotism in the judicial process are rampant. Trust of a common person in the judicial system has been eroding continuously. This abysmal state of affairs has led to the creation of a low-cost alternate disputes resolution system, through which people can access justice, resolve issues, without refereeing to the courts of law. The LSO Narian has also established a Community Dispute Resolution Committees at local level to ensure that justice is quick and affordable.

LSO Narian has established 4 such committees at the VO level. The Committees consist of 15 to 20 members. People register all types of disputes with them. The village level Committees sets up sub-committees for the registered cases and they investigate the cases and take decisions in one or two hearings. The Committees resolve 60 to 70 cases annually, saving millions of rupees of the parties involved. On the other hand, the dispute resolution structure also enhances and strengthen social capital of the COs and VOs.



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