



LSO Initiatives

LSO Valley Rural Support Programme



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An update on the work of Local Support Organisations

Development of Rural Infrastructure

Strong infrastructure is critical for improvement of economic opportunity, standards of living, and social cohesion. The entire landscape of the Sehra Union Council is mountainous, with very poor road links. Therefore, communication is a key constraint in socio economic development of the local people. The LSO is trying its best to improve communication infrastructure across the Union Council. The LSO raised Rs. 300,000 from local people for construction of a road that linked 70 households of Darah Shair Khan Bala village with the main road.

The European Union has supported the LSO in construction of two link roads, widening of a link road and construction of a foot path during the last two years. These projects made movement and transportation easier for up to 300 households. The local people mentioned a number of direct and indirect benefits of these projects; drastic reduction in the prices of commodities, easy access to hospitals and schools, new opportunities for opening shops and enterprises at village level and saving of travelling time. The total cost of these projects was Rs. 1.88 million; EU contributed Rs. 1.5 million, while the beneficiary communities contributed Rs. 0.4 million in cash.

Date of Formation:
04 May, 2009

District:
Poonch, (AJK)

Union Council:
Sehra

Total Households in
Union Council:
3,108

Organised
Households:
1,955

Coverage:
62%

No of Community
Organisations (COs):
94
12 women's

No of Village
Organisations (VOs):
9
all mix

No of General
Body Members:
31
8 women's

No of Executive
Committee Members:
15
4 women's

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, donor agencies and the private sector.



Cooperation and Coordination with Government Line Departments

Social Mobilisation seeks to facilitate societal change through a range of players engaged in interrelated and complementary efforts. A key objective of RSPs' Social Mobilisation interventions is to motivate local government and government line departments to collaborate with the local community institutions.

Under the European Union (EU) funded "Supporting Inclusive Development through Community – Government Capacity Building and Partnership Project", implemented in four districts of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), the local government and line agencies hold monthly meetings with LSO leaders at district level. In these meetings, the government line departments share their current and seasonal activities with the LSO leaders and invite them for collaboration. Similarly, the LSO leaders share their annual work plans with the government officials and explore opportunities for support and partnerships. The meetings offer unique opportunities for the LSO leaders to strengthen coordination with government departments for implementation of joint activities. Similarly, the meetings also play an instrumental role in proper and timely implementation of planned activities of government line departments, using the extensive outreach of the community institutions.



This year, the Government Forest Department shared a plan of tree plantation and invited the LSO to join hand with them. The LSO collected demand resolutions from its member VOs for 8,000 forest plants and submitted to the Forest Department. Due to shortage of stock, the LSO received only 4,000 plants. The plants were transported free of cost to the Tehsil headquarters by the Forest Department and the LSO arranged delivery of the same to the VOs. The VOs distributed the plants among CO members who planted the trees at their private lands. Similarly, the LSO received fruit plants and seed packages from Government Agriculture Department for growing fruit orchards and kitchen gardens and distributed among interested members. By providing fresh and free vegetables for household consumption, the kitchen gardening initiative has proved to be a great help in improving the nutrition standard of the beneficiary households.



Support to Vulnerable Families

As part of its inclusive development agenda, the Valley LSO carried out a survey to identify the vulnerable families across the UC; they found 55 vulnerable families. The LSO then helped them prepare their household level Micro Investment Plans (MIPs), and also arranged technical and financial support for their implementation on need basis. The LSO collected donation of Rs. 2.6 million from local philanthropists for construction of houses for 5 of the poor families. In addition, the LSO arranged poultry packages for 5 widows in order for them to earn some regular income by