



### 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.

### Disaster Risk Management

Thalay is a high altitude valley in the Karakorum Range located in District Ghanche of Gilgit-Baltistan region. Global warming is effecting Thalay valley very badly. Since 2010, the area is hit by floods and mud flow during summers due to excessive melting of glaciers. The floods wash away roads, bridges, heads of irrigation channels and cropped fields. Due to destruction of roads and bridges the entire valley remains cut off from rest of the world for months. This makes relief and rehabilitation efforts for the affected areas very difficult; access becomes impossible for external agencies, shortage in supply of goods including edible items causes difficulties for the residents, and students cannot attend their schools for months. Delays in repair of irrigation channels have dire consequences for the standing crops, orchards and forest trees. Diarrhoea and skin diseases are wide spread due to use of polluted flood water.

The LSO leaders quickly respond to the needs of the affected families. So far they have arranged 4 medical camps for the affected communities in collaboration with Pakistan Army, Government Social Welfare Department and Health Department. They managed 7 temporary schools for up to 2 months to provide education to students who could not go to their schools due to lack of road access. Local educated people volunteer their teaching services in these schools. They collaborate with the government departments for preparation of damage assessment and

<b>Date of Formation:</b> <b>27 February, 2007</b>			
<b>District:</b> <b>Ghanche (GB)</b>		<b>Union Council:</b> <b>Thalay</b>	
<b>Total Households in Union Council:</b> <b>1,246</b>	<b>Organised Households:</b> <b>1,246</b>	<b>Coverage:</b> <b>100%</b>	
<b>No. of Village Organisations (VOs):</b> <b>47</b> <small>22 women's</small>	<b>No. of other Civil Society Organisations:</b> <b>8</b>	<b>No of General Body Members:</b> <b>87</b> <small>44 women's</small>	<b>No of Executive Committee Members:</b> <b>10</b> <small>2 women's</small>





LSO members repairing damaged road on self-help basis

ensuring that the lists are correct and inclusive. They carried out rehabilitation of 12 kilometre valley road, 1 kilometre link road to a Hydro Power Station and 4 bridges with financial assistance of government and non-government agencies, restoring road access to 1,246 families. They also rehabilitated 5 damaged irrigation channels with the financial assistance of RSPN and provided irrigation water to 792 families on time. They trained 5 Master Trainers in DRR with the technical help of Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), who, in turn, rolled out DRR training to 120 women and 120 men across the valley. Moreover, they now have 20 trained people in First Aid with the help of the Government Health Department. In short the LSO has not only been able to mobilise internal and external resources for relief and rehabilitation of the affected people at times of emergencies, it is also now adequately trained and prepared for minimising the impacts of natural disasters.

## Conflict Resolution

Though the rural communities of Thalay are mostly focussed on development and growth under the leaderships of their VO/WOs and the LSO. However, rural development most likely doesn't happen without some conflict among people in the community. If the conflicts are not addressed on time, they may have serious damaging effects on the community's cohesion, and not only hamper their growth and development, but at times can also rollback their development achievements. Therefore, conflict resolution is a key focus area of the LSO. The LSO has a 7 member Conflict Resolution Committee. The Committee

resolves disputes through reconciliation and arbitration. So far the committee has resolved 58 cases out of 63 registered cases over land disputes, 38 out of 40 cases of marriage and family disputes, 27 out of 30 property related disputes and 30 cases related to disputes over loans, trading of animals, infighting among families, friends and neighbours and grazing rights in pastures and fuel wood collection rights from the mountains. With the consent of both parties, the Committee takes the cases back from Police Station, District, Civil and High Courts, and resolves them through arbitration and submits the decisions to the relevant courts for validation. This not only helps the local community maintain their peace and harmony intact, but also facilitates them in saving millions of rupees on litigation and court fee etc.

## Policy Advocacy

One major reason for underdevelopment of the rural areas is mismanagement of government resources allocated for their development. To counter this nuisance, the LSO first developed Village Development Plans (VDPs) of all villages in the area in consultation with their members in 2010. The LSO then developed UC Development Plans by incorporating the development projects identified in the VDPs. The LSO shared these plans with Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RD) authorities and convinced them that in the future, LG&RD will allocate annual development funds in Thalay valley only on the recommendation of the LSO.

The LSO submits development plans to the LG&RD at the time of budget formulation and ensures that their proposed plans are incorporated in the budget. Moreover, the LSO monitors implementation of these projects by contractors hired by LG&RD and ensures quality inputs and services by them. The LSO also contacted the local member of Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) and convinced him to allocate 7 million rupees for construction of an eight kilometre long truck-able road to Thalay Broq, where people grow potato as a commercial crop. The truck-able road will reduce cost of transportation of potato to less than 50% of the current rate. On the recommendation of the LSO the GBLA member has also allocated funds for recruitment of 14 staff for the newly constructed Government Girls Middle School in Thalay. The school building was completed several years ago but was unutilised due to lack of staff.



LSO members meeting with GBLA member