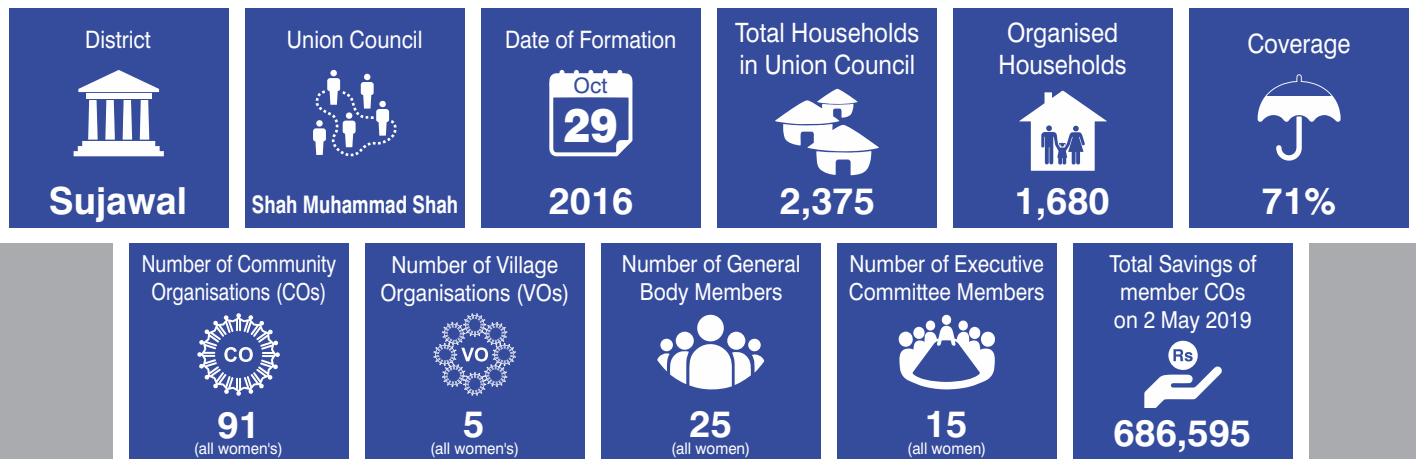


### What are LSOs?

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 Shah Muhammad Shah, Sujawal



(LSO Profile as of 31 March, 2019)

LSO Shah Muhammad Shah, from District Sujawal was formed in October 2016 by 1,680 member households organised in 91 COs and 5 VOs. Women leaders of LSO Shah Muhammad Shah 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.

### Spring Plantation Campaign

In the past, there was no tradition of planting forest trees in the Union Council (UC). Only a few families had forest trees in their courtyards for shade. The main reason for the lack of trees was that people of the area were not aware of the importance of forest trees in improving the environment, providing shade in summer and fire wood in winters. After mobilising community women into COs, VOs and the LSO, they learnt about the importance of forest trees from



LSO members observing "Spring Plantation Campaign"

the SUCCESS staff and Community Resource Persons (CRPs). Therefore, the LSO organised a "Spring Plantation Campaign", planting forest trees at a large scale. With the help of the SUCCESS staff, the LSO collected 1,800 rooted forest plants from the Government of Sindh's Forest Department on subsidised rates of Rs. 10 per plant and provided it to interested members to plant in their courtyards and other open spaces in and around their houses.

Ms. Hameeda, President of the LSO said that some plants were weak and had dried roots. Therefore, only 1,400 plants survived. She said that next time, they will check the plants before buying them from the Forest Department.

### Construction of Street Pavement Project

Around 15 years ago, a brick pavement project was constructed with the financial and technical help of a donor in villages Ahmad Khan Zour and Muhammad Ayob Zour with 184 households and 36 households respectively. However, over time, most portions of the paved road were badly damaged, making dents and ditches all over the road. Therefore, it required large scale repair work costing a significant amount of money which was beyond the financial capacity of the poor villagers. After the formation of the LSO under the EU funded SUCCESS programme, the women of the community became aware of their rights and responsibilities. They learnt that there is an annual development fund with the Union Council to implement such projects. The LSO leaders went to meet the UC Chairman, briefed him about the problems they faced and requested him to provide financial support to repair the road. The UC Chairman visited the road himself and saw the repair that was needed on the road. On his instructions, the local government provided financial support to repair the road. The bricks were mostly undamaged, so they first removed the bricks from the damaged sites, filled potholes and placed the bricks. Now the road is fully repaired, providing easy road access to the 220 rural families living in these two villages.

### Construction of Earth-filled Streets

In villages Hamzo Mallah, Thoro Panhyar, Allah Bachyo Parhyar, Ghulam Rasool Zour and Lal Bux Zour, the streets were low, and during rainy seasons, these streets would flood, becoming inaccessible for the 252 families who live in these five villages. According to Ms Ghulam Fatima, LSO Treasurer, the streets used to become filled with stagnant water after every heavy rainfall, which served as breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Therefore, apart from access issues, the stagnant water would become a health risk. The LSO leaders met with the UC Chairman and asked for his support in resolving this serious problem. The UC Chairman provided funds to raise the surface of the streets in all five villages by earth filling. Now, the streets are clean and accessible in all seasons. Moreover, the infrastructure projects improved the environmental conditions of the five villages.

### Installation of Hand Pumps

The main source of drinking water in the UC is underground water through hand pumps. The government in the past, had installed limited hand pumps in each village. Therefore, women struggled daily to fetch drinking water from these far-off hand pumps. The LSO leaders invited the UC Chairman into their LSO meeting and briefed

him about their problem. The UC Chairman offered that he could provide one hand pump for ten families on the condition that these families bear the water boring and installation cost of the hand pumps. The LSO leaders convinced the community members to accept this offer, which they all did. The LSO leaders also made these beneficiary families to collectively take care of the repair and maintenance of the installed hand pumps. Currently, 45 hand pumps have been installed in all five villages of the UC providing relief to the women of the area as their labour and time taken to fetch water has significantly reduced.

### Establishment of Sewing and Stitching Centre and Distribution of Sewing Machines

A registered welfare organisation, Goth Sudhar Sangat is also working in UC Shah Muhammad Shah. A total of 108 men serve in the General Body and 7 men function as Executive Body members. After the formation of the women LSO, both organisations started coordinating and supplemented each other's development initiatives. On the request of the LSO leaders, Goth Sudhar Sangat provided a room in its two-room office to the LSO to conduct its meetings and other events. Both organisations then approached Bait-ul-Maal and asked for the government department's support. The Project Coordinator of Bait-ul-Maal visited their office. On the request of the LSO, Bait-ul-Maal painted the LSO office. Moreover, Bait-ul-Maal offered to provide six sewing machines to establish a stitching and sewing centre to train women of the area if the community provides space for such a centre without charge. Goth Sudhar Sangat offered the second room of their office to Bait-ul-Maal for this purpose. Bait-ul-Maal established the sewing and stitching centre in March 2019 and runs it on their own cost. Currently, 12 women receive sewing and stitching training from the centre.

The LSO leaders complained about the lack of sewing machines with women who were trained but were unemployed. Bait-ul-Maal provided 15 sewing machines to the LSO which they distributed amongst the deserving trained women. Now these women not only stitch clothes for their family members but also earn on a daily basis by sewing clothes for clients.



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