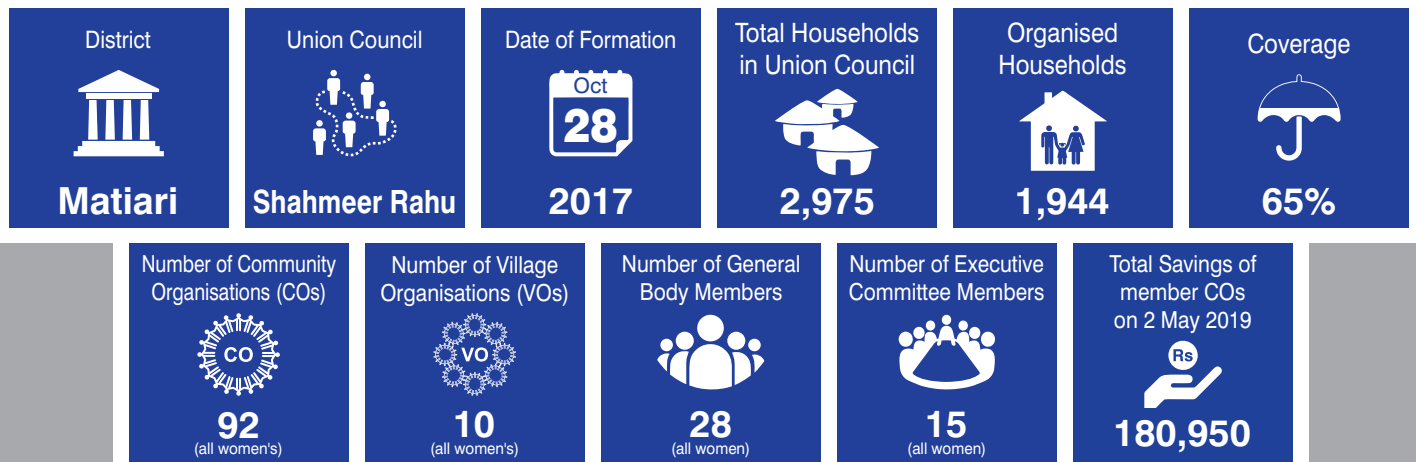


What are LSOs?

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 Shahmeer Rahu, Matiari



(LSO Profile as of 31 March, 2019)

LSO Shahmeer Rahu, from District Matiari was formed in October 2016 by 1,944 member households organised in 92 COs and 10 VO. Women leaders of LSO Shahmeer Rahu 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.

Development Initiatives in Collaboration with Union Council Chairman

A large number of families living in UC Shahmeer Rahu have no proper access to safe drinking water. The only available source of safe drinking water is underground water that is accessed using hand pumps. Underprivileged families cannot afford the cost of hand pump material and installation charges. Therefore, they have had to request drinking water from owners of the hand pumps on a daily basis.



Executive committee members of the LSO holding their meeting

When these underprivileged families were organised in COs, VOs and LSO under the EU-funded SUCCESS programme, the LSO leaders discussed this matter in their meetings and decided to approach the UC Chairman to get support for installing hand pumps in the houses of these families. "In the past, the women of the area had never thought that they would have the courage to visit the office of the UC Chairman and put their demands to him.



However, due to the confidence gained through social mobilisation under the SUCCESS programme, we readily went to the UC Chairman office” said Ms Hakimzadi, the Chairperson of the LSO. The UC Chairman visited these families identified by the LSO leaders and installed hand pumps to them free of cost. Due to this initiative, the LSO was successful in providing hand pumps to 208 households in 12 villages of UC Shahmeer Rahu.

Encouraged by this success, the LSO leaders discussed other development issues raised by their member COs and VOs. One such demand was the installation of solar panels at the household level to provide free electricity. The LSO leaders discussed this matter with the UC Chairman and he promised to arrange resources. “The most underprivileged families in my UC cannot afford to pay electricity bills. Therefore, I am trying to provide free electricity to these families by installing solar panels” said Mr. Raja Rahu, the UC Chairman. So far, solar panels have been installed in four households in the UC.



An LSO member showing her solar panel

Another demand raised by the members was provision of sewing machines to the trained women in stitching and sewing. On the



A trained LSO member with her new sewing machine

request of the LSO leaders, the UC Chairman started providing sewing machines to these women free of cost. So far, 30 women have received sewing machines. “Both the solar panel and sewing machine programmes will continue in future and other families will have access based on the availability of resources within the UC budget” said Ms Hakimzadi, the Chairperson of LSO Shahmeer Rahu.

Adult Literacy Programme

Female literacy rate in the UC is quite low. When women were organised in Community Institutions, they realised that they needed basic literacy and numeracy skills for planning development activities, organising meetings, managing savings and maintaining records of COs, VOs and LSO. An LSO member proposed to request National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) to establish adult literacy centres. The LSO leaders approached District Coordinator NCHD and requested him to start adult literacy programme for interested members. On the advice of the NCHD staff, the LSO leaders prepared a list of interested women to join adult literacy classes and submitted them.

The LSO leaders arranged a meeting of NCHD staff with the men of interested women members to seek their permission. After acquiring their permission, NCHD started 18 adult literacy centres at the village level. A total of 450 LSO members have completed the basic literacy, numeracy and skill development course. As per the terms and conditions agreed with NCHD, the respective VOs arranged one room for the literacy centre, while NCHD provided training with teachers, books, stationery and other training materials free of cost. The adult literacy and numeracy centres run 3 hour classes (2pm to 5pm) 6 days a week for 5 months. They teach basic literacy and numeracy skills, recitation of Holy Quran, stitching and embroidery skills to the students.

The LSO Executive Body members Ms Mahboob Zadi, Ms Bashiran and Ms Kahtoon served as adult literacy and numeracy teachers. The teachers claimed that students were now “able to read and write simple written materials in Urdu, reading expiry dates of medicines and other grocery items to avoid using expired items. Their confidence has increased, their ethical manners and self-discipline level increased, their dressing style has become more modest and clean and their vocational and business skills have developed. These improvements in their human skills and attitude have made them different people”.

Civic Registration

The LSO and its member VOs are working on improving civic registration of their members. So far, they have helped prepare Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) of 125 members, birth registrations of 40 new born children, *nikah nama* of 5 couples, disability certificates of 4 people and disability CNICs to 2 people.



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