What are LSOs?

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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 LASHARI, LARKANA

District	Union Council	Date of Formation	Total Households in Union Council	Organised Households
Larkana	Lashari	Jan 31 2017	2,092	1,444

Coverage	Number of Community Organisations (COs)	Number of Village Organisations (VOs)	Number of General Body Members	Number of Executive Committee Members
69%	87 (all women's)	14 (all women's)	28 (all women)	5 (all women)

(LSO Profile as of 31 December 2019)

LSO Lashari, from District Larkana, was formed in January 2017 by 1,444 member households organised in 87 COs and 14 VOs. Women leaders of LSO Lashari are planning and implementing development activities both on self-help basis as well as in collaboration with government agencies. The 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, making the service providers accountable and also taking self-initiatives to improve their lives

Women who received their CNICs with the efforts of LSO leaders

Protecting Women's Rights

The local community of UC Lashari has been organised into COs, VOs and an LSO under the EU funded SUCCESS programme. The community members are given awareness raising sessions by the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) on twelve cross-cutting development themes, including human and women's rights. It were these awareness raising sessions that inspired the women leaders of LSO Lashari to take steps for protecting fundamental human and women's rights in their UC.

The LSO leaders realised that the Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) is a key instrument to safeguard various human rights. It serves as an identification document to authenticate an individual's identity as the citizen of Pakistan, protected under its Constitution. The CNIC number is required for many activities such as receiving social insurance/Zakat funding, enrolling in education institutions, filing a legal affidavit, transferring funds, opening a bank account, obtaining a utility connection (electricity, phone, mobile

phone, water and sewer, natural gas) etc., in addition to various protections of Fundamental Rights under Part 2 Articles 8 to 28 of the Constitution of Pakistan. Unfortunately, a large number of eligible women and men had no CNICs in UC Lashari. Therefore, the LSO leaders launched a campaign for preparation of CNICs, involving the VO leaders in this movement. They prepared a list of women and men lacking CNICs and requested NADRA to send their Mobile Van to the respective villages. They also motivated the residents to visit nearby NADRA offices to have their CNICs made. This collective action and grassroots approach managed to prepare CNICs of over 7,000 women and men across UC Lashari. The LSO leaders ensured that about 150 people with disabilities (PWDs) received especial CNICs so that they could easily access government's services and support allocated for them.

Both the LSO and VO leaders have taken strides against illegal practices that violate women's rights. An instance of this was when the LSO leaders learnt that a poor family was marrying their young daughter to an old man in exchange of Rs. 500,000. They visited the family and explained to them that the transaction was illegal and immoral, and if they commit this crime, they will be reported to the local police station. This is how the innocent young girl was prevented from falling into life-long troubles and misfortune. In another village, many parents were not ready to send their daughters to government schools due to tribal norms and values. The LSO leaders met these parents and persuaded them to send their daughters to school, reiterating the right to education for all and its role in personal grooming and confidence building. Consequently, 15 girls have been enrolled in school.

Taking Back a Government Primary School from the Land Lord

Before the formation of LSO Lashari under the EU funded SUCCESS programme, numerous parents were not sending their children, especially daughters, to schools. Therefore, the LSO decided to make education a key priority area in their UC Development Plan. The LSO leaders motivated parents to send their school-aged boys and girls to schools. Due to the continuous persuasion and encouragement from LSO leaders, the trend has now shifted, and more and more girls are being enrolled into schools. A primary school was closed for the last three years because the local land lord had occupied it; it was being used as an animal shed. Due to his power and influence, nobody even dared to raise the issue with him. When the women of the UC were organised into community institutions under the SUCCESS programme, they used their unity and collective voice to tackle the issue. The women leaders encouraged the men in their households to go and ask the land lord to vacate the school building. They warned that if men do not go and talk to the land lord, the women will themselves take action. Due to their persistent demand, the village men approached the land lord and asked him to vacate the school. However, the land lord did not concede. A journalist learned about the issue and published a news article in a local newspaper. The police took notice of the news and seized

control of the building from the land lord by force. Now the school has re-opened and 30 students are studying there.

The Government School Taken back by LSO leaders from the Land Lord

Establishment of Adult Literacy Centre

The LSO leaders felt a growing concern for the large number of women in UC Lashari that were illiterate, knowing that Illiteracy negatively impacts people's well-being. The disadvantages of illiteracy are not only multifaceted, they are harmful both to an individual and the society. Facing this issue head-on, the LSO decided to establish adult literacy centres to provide basic literacy and numeracy skills to women who had dropped out of school at a young age due to reasons including lack of proximity of schools, low quality education and deficiency of teachers in government schools. To connect women with educational opportunities, they approached Indus Resource Centre (IRC) and applied for opening adult literacy centres in UC Lashari. This resulted in the IRC opening one centre in December 2019, which will run for 9 months. IRC identified a lady teacher within the village, gave her an 8-day training and provided books, notebooks, pencils, a white board and a cupboard. The teacher established the centre in the veranda of her house and teaches 30 female students in the afternoon, 3 hours daily. Besides providing basic literacy and numeracy skills, the curriculum also includes awareness raising sessions on basic human and women's rights. The students are very happy to be learning new things and expanding their intellect. Due to the obvious benefits of the centre, the LSO has requested IRC to open more centres in other villages and they hope to see results soon.

The Adult Literacy School