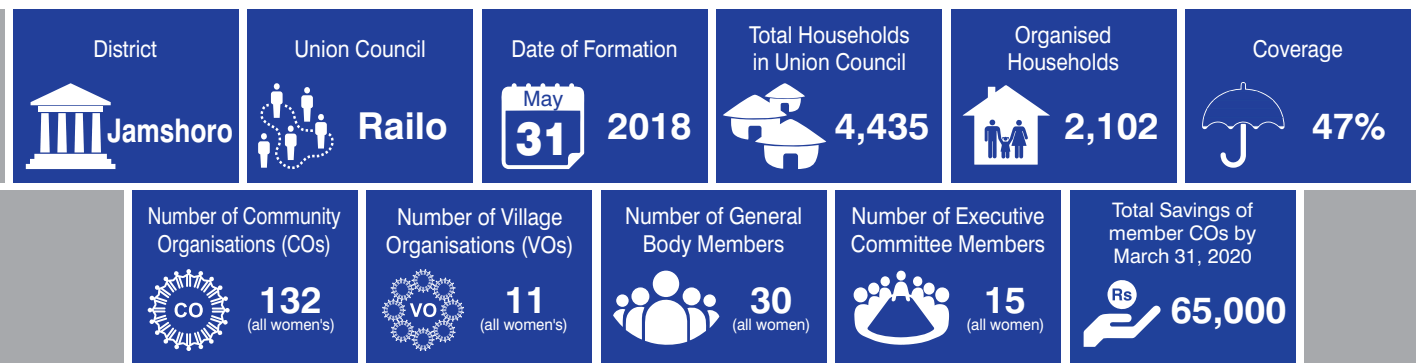


What are LSOs?

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 Latif, Jamshoro



(LSO Profile as of March 31, 2020)

LSO Shah Latif, from District Jamshoro was formed in May 2018 by 2,102 member households organised into 132 COs and 11 VOs. Women leaders of LSO Shah Latif 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 are now gaining awareness about their rights, making the service providers accountable and also taking self-initiatives to improve their lives.

Raising Awareness on Preventive Healthcare

Preventive healthcare is important because it helps people stay healthy and access prompt treatment when necessary, and it can also help reduce people's overall medical expenses. That is why, the organised communities under the EU funded SUCCESS programme are trying their best to raise awareness among their members and apply the acquired knowledge in practice. The Community Resource Persons (CRPs) deliver awareness raising sessions in the monthly meetings of Community Organisations (COs). The women leaders of the LSOs and VOs plan and implement preventive care activities in collaboration with the Government and other agencies.

The women leaders of LSO Shah Latif conducted medical camps in a number of villages of their union council (UC). With the technical

and financial support of Jubilee Insurance Company and Government Health Department, they organised medical camps in four villages of their UC to raise awareness among the community members about family planning. The experts from the Health Department briefed the community women and men about the importance of taking family planning measures for the safety and health of both the mothers and children. They also briefed them about the family planning measures available to them and how the community members can avail them. As a result, a large number of couples have started practicing family planning.

The LSO leaders also organised medical camps in five villages of their UC to prevent diarrhoea in children. The residents of these villages use canal water for drinking, which is extremely polluted, therefore, diarrhoea in children is very common. The hospital is quite far away from their villages, thus, people normally cannot afford to take their sick children to hospitals, causing a very high rate of mortality. In the health camps, the Government health experts briefed the community members about the health hazards of polluted water and how to clean water by proper boiling etc. They also taught them how to make home-based Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS). ORS is a glucose-based salt solution used to prevent and treat dehydration, especially that due to diarrhoea. The community people are so poor that they cannot afford the ORS sachets available in market. Home-based ORS is quite cheap. The community members started practicing both measures and cases of diarrhoea and death in children have significantly reduced.



Promoting Education

After receiving awareness sessions by the CRPs on the importance of education, the LSO leaders started to plan activities they can undertake. The first activity they considered strategic was improving the functions of the School Management Communities (SMCs), because SMCs play a key role in the proper functioning of schools. The SMCs also receive funds on annual basis for repair and maintenance of school buildings and to provide missing facilities. They learnt that while most SMCs utilise the funds honestly, three SMCs were not utilising the funds on school repair and maintenance.

The LSO leaders, therefore, met with the SMC members of these schools and complained to them about improper use of funds. To their surprise, the SMCs produced fake documents of fund utilisation in the past years. Though they knew that those records were not correct, the LSO leaders had no sound proof to support the allegation. So the LSO leaders identified missing facilities or repair work in the school buildings and asked the SMCs to use this year's funds on these tasks. In one school, they identified solar panels and fans for the class rooms. In the second school, the roof was damaged and rain water used to drip down in the class rooms in rainy seasons. Therefore, they asked the SMC to repair the roof of the school. In the third school, the washrooms were not attached to a sanitation line, hence, they were out of use. The LSO leaders asked the SMC to link the washrooms with the sanitation system. The SMCs completed these tasks in the schools because they knew that the LSO leaders are monitoring them closely.

In addition to that, on the advice of the LSO leaders, the VO leaders regularly identify school-aged children who are out of school. They then find out the reason and try to solve the problem and ensure that the children are enrolled in schools. In most families, the main reason is lack of awareness of parents about the importance of educating their children. So the VO leaders convince the parents by explaining its importance. Last year, they enrolled 40 such children in schools, most of them were girls.



Tree Plantation Campaign

The Government of Sindh launches tree plantation campaigns each year. LSO Shah Latif also participated in the campaigns during the

last winter. The leaders of the LSO and member VOs organised tree planting campaigns at village level. During the campaign, they briefed their members about the importance of tree plantation and motivated them to grow a maximum number of trees in their courtyards and other free places in villages, and to protect them from animals. They purchased 200 plants from the Government Forest Department's nurseries on subsidised rates and distributed them among interested members on cost basis.

The villagers also went to Government Forest Department's nurseries and bought 300 more plants and planted them with the help of their members. So, during the last winter, they managed to plant 500 forest plants in their UC. The LSO is planning to continue this activity over the coming years as well.



Vaccination of Domestic Animals

Like all farming societies, domestic animals are the second most important asset of the farmers after land, in UC Railo. However, their productivity was seriously compromised due to viral diseases. The well-off families called private veterinary experts to treat and vaccinate their animals, but the poor farmers were not able to pay their heavy fees and costs of vaccines. Therefore, it was the poor farmers who suffered heavy losses from viral diseases.

On the other hand, the Government Livestock Department had very limited access to the rural communities and was, therefore, unable to provide its services effectively. The Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) signed an MoU with the Government Livestock Department to bridge this gap and link the rural communities with the Department. According to the MoU, TRDP provides awareness to the organised communities about the services available with the Livestock Department along with their contact numbers. The LSO and VO leaders contact the Livestock Department whenever there is an issue. The Livestock Department sends its staff with medicines and vaccines and serves the communities on time. In case of vaccinations, the concerned VO leaders inform villagers about the date and place of vaccination camps, and people bring their animals accordingly. There, the Livestock Department staff brief the farmers about basic healthcare of their animals and types of viral diseases and their signs and symptom, treat sick animals and vaccinate the healthy ones. This arrangement ensures maximum vaccination coverage of animals in a village within a minimum possible time. So far, the LSO leaders have arranged such vaccination camps in four main villages of their own UC and three villages of their neighbouring UC.



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Reported by: Mohammad Ali Azizi, RSPN
Edited by: Meha Pumbay, Knowledge Management Officer, SUCCESS, RSPN
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