












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 Jar

<p>District</p>  <p>Sujawal</p>	<p>Union Council</p>  <p>Jar</p>	<p>Date of Formation</p>  <p>04 2018</p>	<p>Total Households in Union Council</p>  <p>2,938</p>	<p>Organised Households</p>  <p>1,914</p>	<p>Coverage</p>  <p>65%</p>
<p>Number of Community Organisations (COs)</p>  <p>97 (all women's)</p>	<p>Number of Village Organisations (VOs)</p>  <p>10 (all women's)</p>	<p>Number of General Body Members</p>  <p>28 (all women)</p>	<p>Number of Executive Committee Members</p>  <p>15 (all women)</p>	<p>Total Savings of member COs by March 31, 2020</p>  <p>Rs 271,518</p>	

(LSO Profile as of June 30, 2020)

LSO Jar, from District Sujawal, was formed on January 04, 2018, by 1,914 member households organised into 97 COs and 10 VO. Women leaders of LSO Jar are planning and implementing development activities both on a 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. Organised women are now gaining awareness about their rights, making the service providers accountable, and also taking initiatives to improve their lives.

Response to Coronavirus Pandemic

When the coronavirus pandemic started spreading swiftly in Pakistan in March 2020, the government imposed a lockdown all over the country. The lockdown brought the economic activities to a standstill position. The impact of economic slowdown was worst on the poorest families living in rural areas, especially the daily wagers. They had no money to buy food items, so the nutrition issue posed an imminent threat to such families. On the other hand, the government-sponsored awareness-raising messages were not reaching rural areas due to their poor access to print, electronic and social media, making them less likely to be observing safeguarding practices against the disease.



A CRP of LSO Jar is conducting a CAT session along with awareness-raising on COVID-19 in a CO meeting

Realising the severity of the situation, the organised communities in the form of COs, VOs, and LSO under the EU funded SUCCESS programme, immediately started their support activities to their community members. With the help of training and IEC materials on awareness-raising, the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) conducted sessions on precautionary measures of COVID-19 during the Community Awareness Tools (CATs) sessions. While conducting the CO meetings, the CRPs ensured Government SOPs, like wearing face masks, keeping distance, reducing the number of participants to a maximum of 7 members etc. By the end of June 2020, they had conducted awareness sessions in 66 COs.



The response of the community members was very positive and they started to follow appropriate guidelines. However, poor community members had severe affordability issues, like not being able to buy soaps for frequent hand washing. The LSO leaders, therefore, approached the UC Chairman and convinced him to provide soap bars for these families. The LSO leaders identified the eligible families and the UC Chairman distributed soap bars among 2,000 disadvantaged families.

The women LSO leaders also registered 360 poor families under the Federal Government's EHSAAS Emergency Cash Programme. All these families have received PKR 12,000 each from the Programme. This support significantly helped the poorest families in overcoming their socioeconomic hardships in these difficult times.

Recognising their selfless, hard, and coordinated work to combat the pandemic, the Deputy Commissioner Sujawal appointed Ms. Jameela Soomro, General Secretary of LSO Jar, as a member of the Relief Committee. The Relief Committee was notified by the District Administration to provide relief services to the worst affected families. She, in coordination with member COs and VOs, identified eligible families and distributed thirty-day ration among 19 families in collaboration with the Relief Committee.

Construction of Low-Cost Houses under Benazir Housing Cell (BHC)

Studies show that people living in poor or overcrowded conditions are at the risk of infectious diseases and physical and mental health problems. Growing up in inadequate housing may also have a long-term impact on children's life chances because of its effect on a child's learning and development.

According to an estimate, Pakistan has 20 million homeless people. Alarmed by the growing number of homeless people, the Government of Sindh established Benazir Housing Cell (BHC) to provide poor people with affordable homes in all cities of Sindh.



A low-cost pakka house constructed by Benazir Housing Cell

When the LSO leaders learned about the project, they identified five eligible families in their union council through the member VOs and COs. The COs identified five families, the VO validated their identification and submitted the list to the LSO. The LSO submitted the list of vulnerable families to the MPA and Deputy Speaker of Sindh Assembly, Ms. Reehana Laghari. She recommended these families to BHC and the BHC approved their applications. BHC constructed low-cost houses and handed them over to the five vulnerable families in Village Sidique Soomro. These bricked and cemented houses have two rooms, a veranda, and a toilet. Previously, these families suffered in the summer and the rainy season; now they feel safe from the heat in summer and disturbance by rain during the monsoon season. The poor families are very happy and thankful to both the Government of Sindh and the LSO leaders for providing them with a comfortable home.

Plantation of 500 Trees

The LSO leaders bought 500 saplings at subsidised rates from the Forest Department and distributed these amongst five Community Organizations (COs). The LSO representatives further distributed the saplings among their member COs in exchange for the cost incurred. Due to the awareness-raising campaign for tree plantation, the community members take proper care of these plants and the survival rates of the plants are over 95%.



An LSO member looking after her newly planted tree

Paving the Village Streets with Concrete Blocks

Using their collective voice and social influence, the women leaders of LSO Jar approached Ms. Reehana Laghari, MPA, and Deputy Speaker of Sindh Assembly and requested a favour for the pavement of village streets with concrete blocks. On her recommendation, the Public Works Service paved the streets of villages Dodo Samejo and Siddique Soomro, costing about PKR 2,500,000 each. In the past, the dust blown from the unpaved streets caused various diseases. In the rainy seasons, the streets used to collect water, obstructing the commonly used pathways around the area. The schemes, therefore, have significantly improved the living conditions of the beneficiary community members.



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