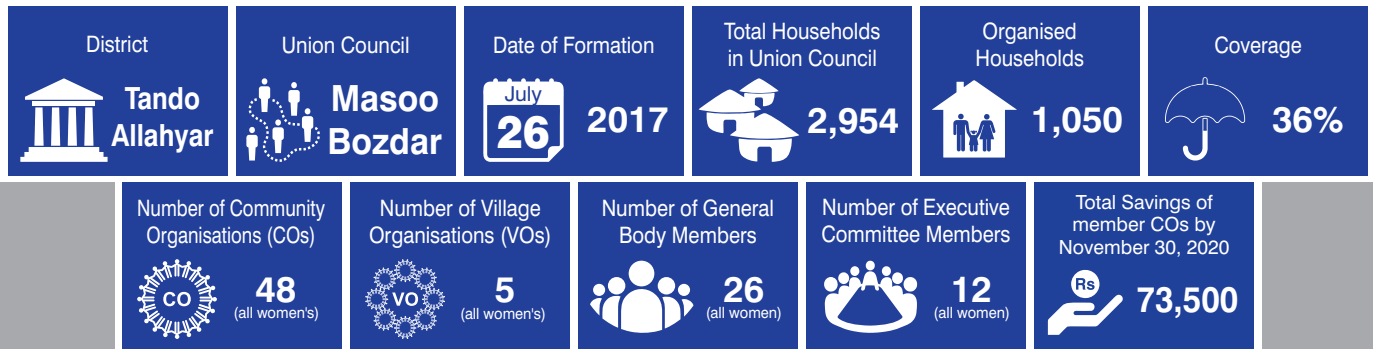


**What are LSOs?**

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

## Local Support Organisation Masoo Bozdar



(LSO Profile as of November 30, 2020)

LSO Masoo Bozdar from District Tando Allahyar was formed on 26th July 2017 by 1,050 member households organised into 48 COs and 5 VOs. The women leaders of LSO Masoo Bozdar 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, holding the service providers accountable, and taking initiatives to improve their lives.

### Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic was confirmed to have reached Pakistan on 26 February 2020, when two cases were recorded. By 17 June, each district in Pakistan had recorded at least one confirmed case of COVID-19. Both the Federal and Provincial Governments launched campaigns to combat the pandemic. The organised communities in the forms of COs, VOs, and LSOs under the EU-funded SUCCESS Programme also initiated self-help initiatives to address the issue at the local level. Later on, they coordinated with the Government and helped the authorities in their fight against the pandemic. Below are the activities of the organised communities in this regard:

- ◆ The women Community Resource Persons (CRPs) are providing awareness to LSO members about the pandemic and educating them about safeguarding and preventive measures during the Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) sessions in the CO meetings. Following the guidelines of the Government of Sindh, the CRPs ensure keeping a six feet distance among the participants during the CO meetings. After delivering the scheduled CAT sessions, the CRPs educate the participants about preventive measures against the spread of COVID-19, which include hand wash frequently with soap, avoid touching



A CRP delivering awareness session on COVID-19 in a CO meeting

eyes, nose, or mouth without first washing hands, stay home, avoid large gatherings, and keep a distance of at least 6 feet when in the company of others, and wear a face mask if sick with cold/ flu-like symptoms or when outside the home in an area with others. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic to date, 10 CRPs of the LSO have conducted 124 sessions in all 48 COs. To further proliferate the information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic among the communities, the women LSO leaders, in collaboration with VO and CO leaders are making announcements from local mosques in all villages. The COVID-19 awareness continues in the union council through the network of CO/VO/LSO and CRPs.



- ◆ With the support of the UC chairman, the LSO leaders provided essential food items to the 200 poorest households.
- ◆ The women members of LSO stitched 51 face masks and distributed them in poor households. The LSO also distributed 90 face masks, 90 hand gloves, and 249 soaps with the support of external donors.
- ◆ The women LSO leaders managed to register 445 poor families under the Federal Government's EHSAAAS Emergency Cash Programme. Out of them, 215 families have received PKR 12,000 each from the Programme. Thus the poorest families received PKR 2.58 million from government sources.

### Provision of Clean Drinking Water

Disease-causing germs and chemicals can find their way into water supplies. The water which people drink and use for other purposes must be clean and safe. Therefore, testing the sources of drinking water and informing the community members about clean and polluted water sources significantly improve their health status.



A source of safe drinking water coloured in green

The LSO Masoo Bozdar did not know about the safety of the drinking water sources in their villages. The NRSP core-funded Water, Immunization, Sanitation, and Education (WISE) programme educated the LSO leaders about this important issue, and offered them to launch a collaborative programme on WISE. With the technical support of NRSP, the LSO leaders identified 38 communal water sources through their CRPs. After identification of these communal water sources, the LSO leaders tested these water sources from PCRWR and found that 28 water sources are clean while 10 are polluted and unfit for human consumption. The LSO painted the safe sources of water with green and unsafe ones with red colours. The CRPs conducted continuous sessions on the importance of using safe drinking water and avoiding using water from polluted sources. As a result of these awareness sessions, the effective demand for safe drinking water rose very high in the LSO members and they approached external sources for installation of hand pumps in areas where the water sources were clean. As a



A source of polluted water coloured in red

result of these efforts, the LSO leaders were able to install 30 hand pumps with the financial support of the Local Government and 160 hand pumps with the financial support of Khidmat-e-Khalq and Junaid Jamshed Charity in UC Masoo Bozdar. As a result of the efforts of the women LSO leaders, 1,446 households are now accessing safe drinking water across the union council.

### Support to the Government Health Department in Immunisation Activities

The women LSO leaders actively supported the Government Health Department in the effective launch of routine immunisation campaigns at the UC level. On the advice of the LSO leaders, the CRPs and VO leaders helped the vaccinators, LHWs, and Polio teams in the immunisation programmes. They also convinced those families who were resisting vaccination of their children due to illogical myths and suspicion. They also identified the children missed in the vaccination campaigns and provided their list to the concerned Health Department staff, and they vaccinated them during their follow up visits.



Vaccination of children by Govt. Health Department

Since June 2019, the LSO is also working with the NRSP core-funded WISE programme. The WISE programme has been integrated with the SUCCESS programme's CAT sessions, and the CRPs are delivering sessions to create awareness about the benefits of immunisation in the community. As a result of these LSO efforts, 84% of children aged 0-11 months completed the vaccine till PENTAVALENT III, while 76% of children aged 12-23 months completed the Measles II vaccination. Apart from this, 50% of pregnant women aged between 15-49 years completed the TT-II vaccine across the UC.



Vaccination of women by Govt. Health Department



## Improving Sanitation Status of the UC

Sanitation and solid waste management is an ignored chapter of the poor rural communities of Pakistan, especially in Sindh. The people in villages are adopting the traditional methods for sanitation and solid waste management in rural areas because there is no proper sanitation and solid waste disposed/management mechanism exists at the household or village level. Mostly, villages are found with heaps of animal dung and other waste. People throw the waste of their homes in front of their own houses without sorting it, which slowly get converted into heaps. When the wind blows, the same waste spreads in the village which has hazardous impacts on the lives of the villagers. Open defecation in villages is another serious issue for the villagers. Research suggests that diarrhoea and other problems associated with ingesting and exposure to human waste affect children under the age of 5 years the most since they are very susceptible to diseases.



A woman preparing a mud dustbin

Before they were organised, the community members of LSO Masoo Bozdar were facing similar problems. After organising in COs, VOs, and LSO under the EU-funded SUCCESS Programme, they discussed their common issues and prioritised them under their development plans. The sanitation issue was raised as one of the priority issues and they decided to resolve them. The LSO leaders, in collaboration with NRSP's core-funded Water, Immunisation, Sanitation, and Education (WISE) programme trained the CRPs on conducting awareness sessions on sanitation. The CRPs raised the awareness of communities on the importance



Village cleaning campaign in progress in a UC village



A low-cost latrine constructed by a community member

and benefits of adopting proper sanitation practices through CAT sessions during the CO meetings and motivated them to take action on a self-help basis. The LSO with support of the WISE programme, conducted village cleaning campaigns in 27 villages. As a result of the campaigns, 11 villages have now become clean. The village cleaning process will continue till all villages are cleaned. To place a proper solid waste mechanism in the UC, the LSO members constructed mud-made dustbins at the household level on a self-help basis which they call "Kachra Kundhi" in the local language. So far, a total of 76 dustbins have been constructed in the UC. In addition to that, 15 plastic dustbins have also been installed at the prominent sites in the UC identified by the LSO leaders with the financial support of the WISE project. The organised rural women also involved themselves in latrine construction to mitigate the issue of open defecation. On their motivation, 342 poor families who defecated openly, constructed low-cost latrines on a self-help basis. The sanitation activity is still going on, and the LSO leaders are trying to clean all villages and settlements in the UC and transforming them into open defecation free areas as soon as possible.

## LSO Education Initiatives

Many school-aged girls and boys are out of school in the UC. Some of the main reasons for out-of-school children included poverty, access issues, illiterate parents, poor quality of education, and teachers' attitudes. The women leaders of LSO Masoo Bozdar are therefore working to improve school enrolment and resolve other education-related issues in their UC. With the support of the



Enrollment Campaign by LSO leaders



Government Education Department and NRSP funded WISE project, the LSO identified 2,303 out of school children aged between 04-12 years through a household survey of the treatment area of the UC. (The UC is one of the research UCs under the SUCCESS Programme, and half of the UC has been earmarked as treatment and the other half as controlled areas.) After identification of these out of school children, the CRPs conducted a series of sessions on the importance of education in the CO meetings. The LSO leaders also conducted an enrolment campaign at the UC level for increasing the enrolment of out of school children in schools. Till November 2020, a total of 449 out of school children were enrolled in different government schools and Madrasas of the Union Council. The enrollment campaign is still on, and the LSO leaders are doing their best to enrol all out of school girls and boys in schools.

### LSO initiatives on Improving Civil Registration

Pakistan ranks amongst the countries with the lowest levels of birth registration. So is the case in UC Masoo Bozdar. Similarly, registration of marriages and deaths are also very rare in the UC. Moreover, many rural women and men do not have CNICs and have not renewed their expired CNICs. Therefore, the leaders of LSO Masoo Bozdar decided to improve civil registration in their UC. On the instruction of the LSO leaders, the CRPs deliver awareness sessions on the importance of civil registration in CO meetings. As a result of these sessions, the people of the UC have started civil registration. So far, they have prepared CNICs of 65 women and men, 15 birth certificates, 10 marriage certificates, and 15 death certificates in the union council on a self-help basis.

### Test to Identify Tuberculosis (TB) Cases

Pakistan, with an estimated 510,000 new TB cases emerging each year and approximately 15,000 drug-resistant TB cases every year, is ranked fifth among the high-burden countries worldwide. Therefore, to identify the TB cases, the LSO leaders conducted screening of the community individuals at the household level. This screening activity was facilitated by Community Health Solution (CHS) funded project Zindagi Naimat Hey, implemented by NRSP. A total of 1,100 individuals were screened in the UC by the CRPs, out of these, 93 individuals were found with TB symptoms. These patients with symptoms were provided tokens for treatment and referred to the CHS TB Centre for free treatment.



TB screening in progress

### Vaccination of Livestock in Collaboration with Govt. Livestock Department

Livestock plays a significant role in the economy of the UC people because they produce meat, milk, manure, and hides for them. Hence they are important productive assets. However, due to

widespread communicable diseases, the production of livestock has suffered heavily, and sometimes the animals die, causing huge losses to the poor families. When a Community Livestock Extension Worker (CLEW) was trained under the EU-Funded PINS ER3 Programme, he created awareness among the LSO leaders about the vaccination of animals. Motivated by his ideas, the LSO leaders approached the Government Livestock Department and requested for vaccination of their animals. On the advice of the LSO leaders, the concerned VO leaders provided needful support to the Livestock Department staff, and they started vaccination of their animals. So far, they have vaccinated 1,175 animals, including 621 buffalos and cows and 554 goats and sheep. It is expected that the vaccination will prove instrumental in controlling the communicable viral diseases in animals and consequently will save the economic losses of the beneficiary families.



Vaccination of livestock by Govt. Livestock Department

### Tree Plantation

Sensitised by the CAT session on the benefits of tree plantation, the LSO leaders decided to plant trees at a large scale throughout their UC. On the instruction of the LSO leaders, the Village Organisation (VO) leaders raised awareness among their member COs about the benefits and importance of tree plantation and created effective demand for planting materials, and submitted the demands for tree saplings to the LSO leaders. The LSO leaders then approached the Government Forest Department for the provision of rooted trees for onward distribution among CO members through VOs. The LSO leaders bought 1,000 saplings at subsidised rates from the Forest Department and distributed them among CO members who planted them in their courtyards and other free spaces near their houses. The Agriculture Entrepreneurs trained and supported by the EU-funded PINS ER3 Programme sold 250 Moringa tree saplings on subsidised rates and the LSO purchased 100 trees on a self-help basis and distributed them amongst the CO members. Thus, a total of 1,350 trees have been planted in the UC. The process continues and the LSO and VO leaders are planning to plant more trees in the future.



Pictures of a Moringa nursery and a tree planted by a CO member in her courtyard



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