

**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 Anmol Ittehad

<p>District</p>  <p><b>Kamber Shahdadkot</b></p>	<p>Union Council</p>  <p><b>Dhingano Mahesar</b></p>	<p>Date of Formation</p>  <p><b>May 30 2018</b></p>	<p>Total Households in Union Council</p>  <p><b>2,396</b></p>	<p>Organised Households</p>  <p><b>1,802</b></p>
<p>Coverage</p>  <p><b>75%</b></p>	<p>Number of Community Organisations (COs)</p>  <p><b>66</b> (all women's)</p>	<p>Number of Village Organisations (VOs)</p>  <p><b>11</b> (all women's)</p>	<p>Number of General Body Members</p>  <p><b>22</b> (all women)</p>	<p>Number of Executive Committee Members</p>  <p><b>5</b> (all women)</p>

(LSO Profiles up to 31 May 2021)

### Activities implemented through the EU funded SUCCESS Programme

 <p>LSO managing CIF Amount <b>PKR 7,937,959</b></p>	 <p>Disbursed CIF loans worth <b>PKR 16,169,548</b> to <b>962</b> poor households</p>	 <p><b>138</b> poorest households benefited from income-generating grants worth <b>1,940,540</b></p>
 <p><b>603</b> poorest households and <b>4,221</b> people have micro health insurance coverage</p>	 <p><b>68</b> (Female 61, Male 07) received technical-vocational skills training</p>	 <p><b>07</b> Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI) schemes implemented</p>

### Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI)

The LSO has implemented **07 (05 Complete, 02 Ongoing) different Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI) schemes** in the Union Council Dhinghano Mehasir, under the EU Funded SUCCESS programme.

The total worth of these schemes is **PKR 4,240,485** and a total of **474 household** have benefited from these schemes. A total of **2,946 population** has

benefited from these schemes. The schemes include **Brick Pavement of the streets and RCC Culverts**. The schemes have improved the basic infrastructures and productive assets used by, and services delivered to, the targeted communities. The community members are benefited from improved community infrastructures to meet their basic needs and gain better access to public services.



## Activities implemented through self-help and in collaboration with Government and other development agencies:

1. Reopening of **03 previously closed primary schools** and enrolment of **280 boys and girls** in these schools
2. Convinced the reluctant families to **enrol 70 girls** in school
3. Registered **CNICs of 40 women**
4. Prepared **B-forms of 1200 students** to receive monthly stipend from Government of Sindh
5. Resolved community issues in **CNIC registration with NADRA** Manager Shahdadkot
6. Improved nutrition by **engaging 31 community members in kitchen gardening**
7. Provided ration bags to **15 members** per VO during **COVID-19** with the support of AC Sijawal
8. Distributed **80 ration bags** to the needy families during COVID-19 with the help of local philanthropists
9. Facilitated the vaccination of **1130 individuals in the UC**
10. Reopened the **BHU** site in the UC for the facilitation of medical services
11. Stopped a **child marriage case of a 14-year-old girl**
12. Trained **4 CRPs** on sessions regarding difference b/w HIV and AIDs through Bridge Consultant Foundation
13. Organised **2 medical camps** for screening of HIV and AIDs, especially for pregnant and lactating women

*LSO Anmol Ittihad, from District Kamber Shahdadkot, was formed in May 2018 by 1,802 member households organised into 66 COs and 11 VOs. Women leaders of LSO Anmol Ittihad 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 by 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.*

provided by the government. Right after the formation of the LSO in May 2018, the matter of closed schools was brought to the notice of the women LSO leaders by the concerned VOs. Upon inquiry with the Education Department, it was found that both schools had teachers, but they were not coming to their schools while still receiving their salaries from the Education Department. The women leaders asked the teachers about their reasons for absence from their schools, but they provided baseless excuses and did not listen to the women leaders. A meeting was then called with



Government officials' visit to closed schools

## Reopening of Previously Closed Primary Schools

The government primary schools in villages Muhammad Zaman Brohi and Jangi Khan Sonani were closed for the last three years due to lack availability of teachers. Previously, the community members did not consider any responsibility in making efforts for reopening of closed schools. However, when the women of the UC Dhingano Masher were organised into COs, VOs, and LSO with the technical support of the EU-funded SUCCESS Programme, they received awareness about their roles and responsibilities in education, health, and other civic facilities

the notable and influential people of the UC who were briefed about the unprofessional attitude of the teachers. A further meeting was arranged with the Taluka Education Office Sijawal and complaint was filed against the teachers. On the order of the Taluka Education Officer, both teachers returned to their schools immediately.

The return of teachers led to the enrolment of 80 boys and girls to the schools, however, they did not have books to continue their education. Therefore, the LSO leaders invited a local journalist to visit these schools. Upon his visit, the journalist published an article in the local newspapers highlighting the issues of the poor students. This built some pressure on the Educational Department, and they provided course books to the enrolled students.

In Village Khan. M Bozdar, LSO leaders and the Community Resource Person (CRP) participated in the activity of the CIF/IGG appraisal filling. During the VO meeting, they came to know that the village's school has been closed. Upon visiting the building, the leaders found that the building was used as livestock stable. The VO leaders and members shared that a government teacher is assigned to teach the children of the village, but he has been absent for the past few years.

An emergency meeting was called at the LSO office and a formal committee was formed to resolve the issue. The committee visited the teacher's home and discussed the issue that his absence is depriving the students of education. After negotiations, the teacher promised that he will regularly visit the school. Afterwards, the school building was cleaned up to facilitate good educational services for the students. As of now, 200 students are enrolled and getting education in this school.

### **Enrolment of Girls in Schools**

Due to cultural reasons, the men in certain families of the LSO area did not allow their girls to enrol in schools. As a result, all women members of such families remained illiterate. This issue was raised in the LSO meeting and the LSO leaders decided to visit these families to motivate their men for sending their girls to school. Visits were made to such families and men were briefed about the importance of girls' education followed by the multiple problems faced by illiterate women in society. As a result of their efforts, 70 girls have been admitted to schools in villages Telan Jatoi, Jungi Sunani, and Kot Lal Bux Mahesar.

### **Civic Registration – Preparation of CNICs**

The men in village Kot Lal Bux Mahesar were not allowing their women to prepare their CNICs, due to which poor women had restricted access to their civic rights such as getting medical facilities from government hospitals, casting their votes in elections etc. After the formation of the LSO, this issue was brought to the notice of its leaders. The

matter was discussed in the LSO meeting and the Executive body advised the President and the Manager of the concerned VO to conduct door-to-door visits of such families and convince their men to provide full support in CNIC registration. The mission is currently in progress and so far, the LSO has been successful in preparation of CNICs for 40 women.

### **Civic Registration – B-Form Registration**

The Sindh Education Foundation had initiated its Scholarship Program "Sindh School Education Scholarship Program" (SSESP) in 2017 to honour to encourage the talented students of Sindh Province with an objective to link them with quality institutions across Pakistan and to pursue their post-primary education up to higher secondary level.

The students across the UC Dhinghano Mehasir were unable to receive the monthly stipend due to lack of civic registration (B-forms) as per Government of Sindh's Policy. The matter was discussed in LSO Meeting. The LSO President visited the NADRA office to gain the right information about the Government policies and then guided the VO leaders to motivate the community members to register with NADRA. Due to awareness raised during the CO meetings, 1200 students have obtained B-forms from NADRA and are now receiving PKR 800/- stipend per month from the Government of Sindh.

### **Meeting with NADRA Manager Shahdadkot**

05 members of LSO Anmol Etihad were fined by NADRA due to doubling of their names in CNIC registration. Total PKR 5,000/- per head was charged, and due to errors in ID cards, the members were also not able to take benefit from the Community Investment Fund (CIF) by SRSO. The matter was discussed in the LSO routine meeting and the concerned members were also called to attend the LSO meeting. The members said that they cannot afford the huge fine amount. The leaders decided to meet the NADRA officials for a possible way out. On the next day, the LSO President along with the 05 members visited the NADRA office Shahdadkot where she explained the whole matter and requested concession for the poor community members. The Manager appreciated the efforts of LSO leaders and promised his full support. Later on, the fine was reduced to PKR 3,000/- per head and errors in CNIC cards were also rectified.

### **Improvement in Nutrition by Promoting Kitchen Gardening**

Nutrition deficiency is very common in rural Sindh. A main cause of nutrition deficiency is low consumption of quality vegetables due to ever-increasing prices. A kitchen garden is an inexpensive solution for this matter as it provides a regular, and handy supply of fresh vegetables which are



essential for a balanced diet. Green vegetables contain vitamins and minerals which protect people against diseases. Therefore, the SUCCESS staff is promoting kitchen gardening in the programme areas. After the formation of LSO Anmol Ittihad, their leaders were briefed by the SUCCESS field staff on the importance and methods of kitchen gardening. The leaders of VOs Sawera and Kot Lal Bux agreed to pilot kitchen gardening. The field staff provided them with technical support and helped them get quality vegetable seeds and other required inputs. As a result, 31 women LSO members started kitchen gardens in their courtyards, and they are quite happy with the results. Based on these successful pilots, the LSO leaders are planning to expand kitchen gardening in all interested VOs shortly. Ms. Shamshad, the LSO President has started kitchen gardening herself as well. She said that a good number of their LSO members are adapting kitchen gardening now. She cultivates onions, spinach, cabbage, mustard, and ladyfingers in her kitchen garden. Ms. Shamshad wants to expand her kitchen garden area to cultivate more vegetables so that she can fulfil her household's maximum demand of vegetables from her kitchen garden.

### Support During COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic spread worldwide, Pakistan went through a complete lockdown period making poorest households unable to earn the bread and butter for their families. During this crisis' situation, LSO leaders and members stepped forward and decided to help the poorest households across the UC. Initially, the savings of COs were utilised to start a fundraising campaign. A list of deserving households across the UC was prepared which were then granted the amount of PKR 1000 and 500.

LSO Leaders and members put in efforts to reach and support every poorest household in the UC during the lockdown period. For this purpose, help was sought from the local philanthropists. Assistant Commissioner Sijwal and other local notables were contacted. With the help of LSO CBK, an authentic list of the poorest households

across the UC with family roosters and detailed data was prepared to extend the support to needy families. The list was submitted at the AC office. Upon submission, AC Sijwal took notice and provided ration bags to 15 members per VO in the presence of the LSO leaders. Furthermore, 80 ration bags were also distributed with the help of the means gathered from local philanthropists. These bags were distributed among 04 VOs. On self-help basis, the LSO leaders also prepared the ration bags from the LSO fund and distributed them among the needy community members. 25 households from village Kot Ghulam Shah struggling to survive hunger during the lockdown received this aid from the LSO.

Community Resource Persons (CRPs) were also asked to deliver the awareness sessions on the prevention of COVID-19 and demonstration of handwashing practice. Therefore, CRPs visited the villages and conducted such sessions at the doorstep of the community households.



Hand washing demonstration by CRP



Meeting with AC Sijwal



Money distribution to needy families during COVID-19



Ration distribution during COVID-19



## COVID-19 Vaccination

The LSO leaders were contacted by the COVID-19 focal staff at Government's Basic Health Units (BHUs) for the support in flow of vaccination cases. The LSO leaders disseminated the message among the VO leaders and CRPs to mobilise the local community and raise awareness on facilitation of vaccination at BHUs. Initially, the community was confused and showed resistance towards vaccination due to myths regarding side effects of the vaccine. However, with the continuous efforts of VO leaders and CRPs, a total of 1130 individuals have been successfully vaccinated so far. In the village Hayat Gopang, UC Chairman also participated in the vaccination activity. Still, the efforts are continuous, as all community members join hands to make Pakistan Corona-free.

## Re-Opening of the BHU Site in the UC

The community members were facing the difficulty of health facilities in their UC as they had to travel far to other UC to seek any medical help. Due to the long distance, the community people faced many losses and incidents, especially in the delivery cases.

The building of BHU, located at Village Kot Ghulam Shah, was non-functional. To facilitate the community members, the LSO President along with the members of different VOs visited the PPHI District office Kamber Shahdadkot and met with the District Manager Mr. Abdul Rahim Junejo. As representatives of the community, they discussed the matter with him and shared the difficulties faced by the local people. Mr. Junejo admired their efforts and level of awareness.

The building was renovated and a doctor along with a Nutrition Assistant was arranged for the BHU. Now, an OTP site is also regulated in the BHU. The community is now at ease as the medical facilities are readily available to them.

## Stopping Child Marriages

Early marriages take away a girl's freedom of education and destroy her mentally and physically.

Community Leaders assume their role to reduce such practices that are creating a harmful impact on the community members in any way. During an LSO's routine meeting, the leaders and members came to know about the marriage of a young girl in their UC. After consultation, the meeting reached the consensus to stop the marriage by any means. The LSO leaders approached the bride's family

and requested to stop the marriage temporarily until their daughter reaches the appropriate age which is required for marriage. The bride-to-be at her 14 years of age was not aware of the meaning of marriage, and roles and responsibilities that come along. She stated that *"I am not aware of the marriage ceremony, and who the groom is. I am a school-going girl. One day all of a sudden, my mother asked me to skip school and stay at home. My mother had only told me that some females will come, and I will have to sit in the room for a few days"*. Initially, the leaders received a bitter response from the family and were rejected, however, the consistent effort and persuasion formally stopped the event. The LSO leaders have aimed that they would never allow any such act in their area.

## HIV Sessions and Medical Camp with the Help of Bridge Consultant Foundation

Pakistan is one of the countries in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region where new HIV infections are increasing at an alarming level since 1987. The current HIV epidemic in Pakistan is defined as a concentrated epidemic. Considering this concern, LSO leaders visited the Bridge Consultant Foundation (BCF). The BCF asked the LSO leaders to nominate 04 CRPs for a one-day training on sessions regarding difference b/w HIV and AIDs, symptoms, testing, and prevention from HIV. The list of CRPs was submitted to the BCF and later, the trained CRPs conducted sessions in the community for 06 months. During these 06 months, 2 medical camps were arranged for pregnant and lactating women and 50 cases were referred to the BCF. Four people were diagnosed as infected (1 male, 3 females including one minor and a mother and daughter duo). The mother and daughter were cured after the treatment whereas the minor girl is still under treatment. The CRPs were rewarded with a stipend by BCF for their tremendous efforts and hard work.



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