



LSO Initiatives

LSO Mohar Welfare Organisation

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 mobilise rural communities 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, donors agencies and the private sector.

The LSO

District: Mianwali, Punjab
Union Council: Kamar Mashani
Total Households in Union Council: 2,139
Organised Households: 1,817
Coverage: 85%
Number of Village Organisations (VOs): 10 (5 men's VOs, 5 women's VOs)
Number of Community Organisations (COs): 170
Number of General Body Members: 156 (121 men and 35 women)
Number of Executive Body Members: 33 (26 men and 7 women)

The Initiatives

IDENTIFICATION OF BENEFICIARIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS

The LSO has developed several linkages with various local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and helped them to distribute their inputs by making sure that the recipients are those who are the most deserving.

a) Tarang Wasaib, a local NGO visited union council Kamar Mashani after the floods of 2010 and decided to distribute agricultural inputs (for the wheat season) to those that were returning

back to their homes. The LSO decided to distribute the inputs at the village level using their VOs. Each VO provided the inputs to those who had land located in a cultivatable position but who were lacking the means of purchasing agricultural inputs. 300 deserving households were given agricultural inputs (with each package enough to plant a two acre piece of land) consisting of:

- One 50 kg Bag of Urea
- Two Bags of Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) Fertilizer Packets
- One Pesticide Bottle
- One 50 kg Bag of Seed

b) In July of 2011, the Qatar Foundation heard about the LSO and its activities in the union council and decided to use the LSO platform in order to distribute date packages for the upcoming month of Ramadan to deserving households. They provided the LSO with 500 packages of dates (each package consisting of six kilos of dates) which were to be distributed. The LSO did so at the village level, with each VO identifying poor and deserving (both member and non-member) households.

CONFLICT-RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

A conflict-resolution committee at the Thana level had always been redundant in the past. However, since the last two years, the LSO has managed to revamp the committee by ensuring that along with local government officials, ordinary representatives from the community are present as well; previously the committee had been overrun by local influential figures. The conflict-resolution committee now includes four LSO members who have successfully transformed the committee into an essential part of local affairs. The committee has been able to quell numerous local issues, ranging from land disputes, robberies, internal family-disputes as well as inter-family issues. An example of such an impact was in the case of two neighbouring households that had been each other's sworn enemies for 60 years due to a murder. The committee was able to bring a resolution between the two households, in which the guilty family was asked to pay Rs. 500,000 for their crime (later on, this amount was returned as a sign of good will).

INPUT SUPPLY CENTRE

As a result of increasing prices of basic products and supply shortages, the LSO decided to open an input supply centre. The centre provides both its members and non-members with basic supplies such as fertilizer, animal-feed, wheat and sugar at reasonable market rates, and at especially discounted rates for its deserving members. For example, the LSO purchased 100 kg bags of wheat for Rs. 2,403 each, which later on they were able to sell for Rs. 2,450. Because the LSO maintains supplies of these basic necessities, they are able to supply their clients even in times of shortages in the market.

USAID AMBASSADOR'S FUND PROGRAM FOR VICTIMS OF FLOOD

The LSO has managed to obtain a much-coveted project funded by USAID's Ambassador's Fund Program. The LSO designed a project is aiming to build the houses of 35 poorest households during the period of January to September 2011.

Each household will be provided with a one-room house and a bathroom. As of June, the LSO has built 18 houses, all for those that need it the



Fazalan Bibi, a recipient of Dates from Qatar

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Subsidised Retail

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MRDP INPUT SUPPLY CENTER
مہاراول ڈویلپمنٹ پروگرام
کمرشانی وک، او، سرمد خیل
PH-397553

Essential supplies in the LSO's Input Supply Centre



most, i.e. widows, households with no shelter at all and households that earn less than Rs. 4,000 per month.

DONATIONS FOR FLOOD-AFFECTED IN SINDH

Some of the LSO members had met representatives of an NGO from Dadu in March 2011 in Multan regarding agriculture. The representatives told the LSO members of the dire situation of the poorest households in Dadu, where they had not been able to harvest wheat, resulting in them having no rations for their own consumption.

Upon their return, the members consulted with the rest of their LSO and it was decided that donations would be collected from the LSO members and other locals. Each household donated wheat, resulting in a total amount of 10,000 kgs of wheat. In order to avoid high transportation costs, the LSO sold the wheat for Rs. 220,000 in Mianwali, which then four LSO members used to purchase rice in Dadu. With the money, the LSO members were able to purchase 50 kgs of rice for 150 poor households.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Since the formation of the LSO, the women of union council Kamar Mashani, especially

those who were members of the LSO, have felt a tremendous change in their lives. Women belonging to this highly conservative area were traditionally never allowed to leave their houses. However because of the LSO and its efforts in first mobilising those women who were related to male LSO members, the women have slowly been able to enter the public arena. Examples of this are the increased number of women attending meetings (both at the village and union council level), women going to banks as well as to relatives and neighbours. These strides however were not achieved easily, as many women members had to undergo ridicule and were ostracised for their membership. That has changed now with those very same people becoming members of the LSO. The fact that the LSO represents a united body has also made a difference in the lives of women: an example is of an LSO member who when beaten by her son because of her membership, was defended by her LSO. The LSO confronted her son and told him that if he ever repeated his behaviour, they would report him to the police. As a result, the son asked for his mother's forgiveness and now does not interfere in her activities.



Kulsoom Bibi, an energetic activist of the LSO who is able to work because of the LSO's influence