



LSO Initiatives

LSO Rural Community Development Organisation

What are LSOs?

LSOs are union council-level organisations consisting of grassroots communities and are central to the RSPs' approach of Social Mobilisation. Social Mobilisation entails the organising of rural communities (with a special focus on women and the poorest) into their own organisations through a three-tiered structure. LSOs consist of Community Organisations (COs) (neighbourhood-level community groups) and Village Organisations (federations of COs at the village level). These two tiers federate to form the LSO at the third tier in order to carry out community-led development of the union council. LSOs are able to carry out development through self-help initiatives, linkages with NGOs, donors and the private sector as well as work with and hold local government accountable due to their advantage of numbers.

The LSO

District: Bagh, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK)

Union Council: Topi

Total Households in union council: 3,500

Organised Households: 2,452

Coverage: 70%

Number of Village Organisations (VOs): 14 mixed VOs

Number of Community Organisations (COs): 119 (52 men's COs, 45 women's COs and 22 mix COs)

Number of General Body Members: 103 (75 men and 28 women)

Number of Executive Body Members: 22 (13 men and 9 women)

The Initiatives

STIPENDS FOR THE POOREST

The LSO organised for 338 people to get monthly stipends from the Zakat Committee¹ of Rs. 1,000 each. The people identified by the LSO were all either widows or orphans.

¹ Zakat is an obligatory payment made annually under Islamic law on certain kinds of property and used for charitable and religious purposes. The Zakat Committee is a Government committee which manages and decides how collected Zakat should be spent.

FOREST PLANTATION AND PROTECTION

The LSO has invested its time and energy into ensuring that its surroundings maintain its beautiful forests. In this regard, the LSO has contacted the Forestry Department and obtained over 370,000 plants. In addition to this, the LSO has Forest Protection Committees in each of its villages in order to stop people from illegal logging and to quell forest fires.

GIRLS' COLLEGE AND VOCATIONAL CENTRE

Through the local government, the LSO has managed to get a Girls College and Vocational centre approved. The approval was granted in 2010 and at the moment the buildings are under construction (See Picture Above).

AWARENESS REGARDING DRUGS

The LSO, being aware of the dangers of drugs and the risk that it poses to its youth, organised an awareness session regarding the danger of drugs. The LSO contacted the District Health Officer (DHO)-Poonch, a doctor and a professor to deliver the session.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

The LSO has formed a conflict resolution committee which consists of eight Executive Body Members and 25 General Body members. The committee deals with local disputes so that they do not have to go to the local courts. Only in extreme cases, when the committee is not able to resolve an issue, do the courts step in. So far the committee has solved a total of 113 cases including one murder case, 55 land dispute cases, 13 kidnapping cases, 15 robbery cases and 29 fights. In any particular case, the committee nominates three members to go and investigate the case in detail and to report back their findings. The committee then gives its judgement. Those that do not abide by the judgement are socially boycotted by the entire union council; resulting in the fact that within a week, the guilty party is ready to carry out their punishment.

BUILDING OF MADRASSAHS IN EVERY VILLAGE

The LSO through local donations have set out and installed a Madrassah in each and every village. The purpose of this is so that young children have a place to learn how to read the Quran while at the same time providing elderly women with Quran-reading lessons in the evening. In some cases, a Madrassah was already present but in bad condition while some villages did not have any Madrassah at all. In addition to one-off donations, the wealthy households in the villages have been asked to make monthly donations to their Madrassah; an example being of one wealthy household providing Rs. 3,000 per month.

RAINWATER HARVESTING

The LSO through its linkages development is taking part in a project being implemented by the Maqsood Welfare Society. The project aims to combat some of the problems regarding access to clean water (a common problem in mountainous areas) by harvesting rainwater. The pilot project will



A hillside the LSO is working on currently for plantation

be implemented throughout the UC and is scheduled to start in the coming month.

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A Madrassah that the LSO has renovated

