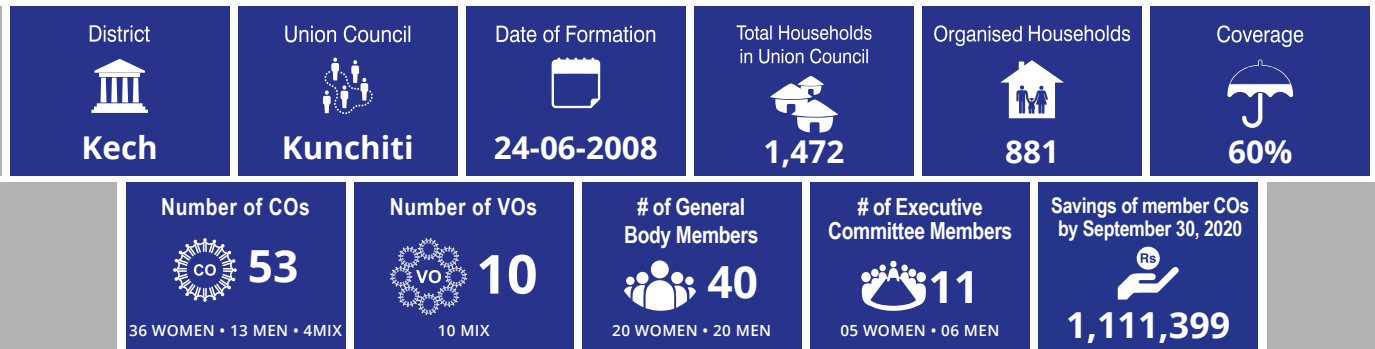


LSOs or Local Support Organisations are central to the 'Social Mobilisation' approach of the Rural Support Programmes (RSPs). In a bid to reduce poverty and empower marginalised people (especially women), the RSPs under BRACE, mobilise rural women and men into a three-tiered structure, which consists 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 Dasht



LSO Dasht, from District Kech, was formed on 24th June 2008 by 881 member households organised into 53 men and women COs and 10 men and women VOs. The leaders of LSO Dasht are planning and implementing development activities both on a self-help basis as well as in collaboration with government agencies. The EU-funded BRACE Programme is empowering rural men and women in Balochistan through realising the power they gain from collective action. Organised men and women are now gaining awareness about their rights, making the service providers accountable, and also taking initiatives to improve their lives.

Preventive Measures to Contain Spread of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic caused serious socio-economic challenges along with health issues. The leaders of LSO Dasht, which has been revitalised under EU funded BRACE Programme, instantly came into action and played their part in helping the locals, and coordinating with Government Authorities. The LSO leaders played key roles in the following activities:

1. Provision of ration to poorest families: When the Government imposed nation-wide lockdown to prevent the spread of the virus, the poorest people, mainly daily wagers, lost their work opportunities and livelihood sources. The households faced a scarcity of food items for their family members. The LSO leaders identified such families in need, collected donations from its members and provided ration to twelve families.
2. Registration with the GoP's EHSAS Emergency Cash Programme: When the government announced EHSAS Emergency Cash Programme, a nation-wide social protection initiative, the poor members of the LSO were facing difficulties in registering themselves under the

programme. The LSO leaders, in close coordination with the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) and VO leaders, helped register 135 poor families under the programme. Around 110 poor families received cash grants.

3. Awareness raising about COVID-19: The pandemic posed a major challenge regarding awareness gaps on the potential threats of the COVID-19 virus, precautionary measures to be taken to avoid getting infected by the virus and quarantining procedures for the infected persons. The awareness raising campaigns conducted by the Government via TV channels and mobile messages were not reaching the majority of the community members. Therefore, the LSO decided to conduct focused awareness raising campaigns via its Community Organisations (COs). The LSO trained the CRPs on COVID-19 preventive measures and asked them to deliver a session to CO members after their routine Community Awareness Toolkit (CAT) sessions. So far, the CRPs have conducted 191 awareness raising sessions on COVID-19. The response of the community was very positive and they are trying their best to follow the government instructions.

4. Distribution of pamphlets/brochures/leaflet: Along with verbal communication in CO meetings, the LSO distributed informative documents containing awareness raising messages on COVID-19. So far, they have distributed 405 pamphlets/brochures/leaflets among the community members. The documents were provided to the LSO by NRSP.
5. Display of banners: The LSO leaders also displayed four banners, conveying precautionary messages on the pandemic in the central places of their UC. NRSP provided technical and financial support in developing these banners.

Rehabilitation of Basic Health Unit

The Basic Health Unit (BHU) of UC Kunchiti was closed for the past several years. This was because the building of the BHU was old and run-down, it was in need of heavy investment for its rehabilitation. Furthermore, the staff of the BHU was from far flung places which prevented them from performing their duties regularly. The out-of-service BHU was a cause for serious concern for the community members.

When the LSO was revitalised under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the LSO leaders discussed the matter of the out-of-service BHU in their meeting and decided to contact the authorities of People's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) to seek their support in rehabilitation of the BHU. The LSO leaders briefed

the PPHI authorities about the condition of the BHU and requested them for its rehabilitation. PPHI repaired the BHU building and provided all required medical equipment and machines. On consistent advocacy of the LSO leaders, the Government Health Department posted staff residing in nearby areas, at the BHU, so they perform their duties regularly. At the moment, a Lady Health Worker (LHW), a dispenser, a vaccinator and a midwife are working at the BHU. Due to the improved performance of the BHU staff, people from nearby UCs too now take their patients there for treatment. This advocacy by the LSO members has not only helped the residents of UC Kunchiti receive quality health care from the rehabilitated BHU, but has also benefitted residents of nearby UCs.



The BHU after rehabilitation

Arrangement of Playground for Youth

Playgrounds offer a multitude of benefits that go far beyond aesthetics and give youngsters something fun to do. Youth constantly learn through play by making new friends, sharing, taking turns and interacting with different children. This increased interaction with children of all backgrounds and abilities gives youth a more open view of the world and the opportunity to build new relationships. However, due to lack of a proper playground, the youth of UC Kunchiti was deprived of such benefits.

The matter was discussed at an LSO meeting and the leaders decided to acquire land to set up a playground. The LSO leaders

identified a suitable, two-acre land that was situated nearby the town centre of the UC. Since land is very expensive in the township, the LSO was unable to raise enough funds to purchase this land. As an alternative, the LSO leaders formed a committee to meet with the land owners. They requested the land owners to consider donating their land for the public good so they can construct a playground. Fortunately, each of the land owners happily gifted his share of the land to the LSO and the LSO converted it into a playground. Now both the kids and youth of the UC come to play at the playground and organise tournaments of cricket, volleyball and other games in it.



The playground for youth

Civic Registration

After rehabilitation of the LSO under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) started giving awareness sessions in COs through Community Awareness Toolkits (CAT). It was through these sessions that the LSO leaders learnt about the importance of civic registration and started campaigns for civic registration. So far, they had achieved the following progress in this regard:

1. Preparation of Computerised Identity Card (CNIC) is difficult and costly for the people living in remote villages, because, they have to pay heavy transport cost to travel from their village to the district Head Quarter, where the NADRA office is located. Because of this, a lot of the villagers did not have a CNIC. Having been made aware of the importance of CNIC, people are now taking an interest in preparing their CNIC. So far, 84 men and women have prepared their CNICs.
2. There was little awareness in the local community about the importance of registering themselves to vote with the Election Commission. However, as a result of awareness raising efforts of the LSO leaders, all the people who acquired their CNICs got themselves registered with the Election

Commission.

3. Birth registration on time is a crucial step in getting CNIC and Local Certificate later on in life. The practice of birth registration was very rare in the UC. However, the awareness raising efforts of the LSO leaders, helped enlighten community on its importance and people have now started registering their new born children with NADRA. So far, 109 birth registrations have been reported by the member VOs of the LSO.
4. Local Certificate is a key document in getting Government jobs on quota basis and accessing other benefits. The LSO leaders motivated people to prepare Local Certificates for the educated youth of the area. So far, 133 people have prepared Local Certificates.
5. Wedding ceremonies were held according to the old local traditions, in which registration of Nikah was not a necessary practice. This meant many people in the Union Council were not registering their Nikah. Upon the awareness raising efforts of the LSO, 77 couples have obtained their marriage certificates.

Tree Plantation Campaign

Under the BRACE Programme, the LSO leaders were provided awareness on the role of trees in improving the local environment, providing shade and wood for the family members and fodder for their domestic animals. These sessions motivated them to launch a tree plantation campaign. However, finding tree saplings was a major obstacle. The LSO leaders learnt from the BRACE Programme staff that the Government Forest Department distributes rooted plants free of cost among interested people. The LSO President and Manager went to the Forest Department and

requested such plants. The Forest Department provided them with 430 rooted plants. They loaded the plants in jeeps and brought them to their UC. Here, they organised a tree plantation campaign and invited the Deputy Commissioner Kech for its inauguration. The Deputy Commissioner accepted their invitation, appreciated their efforts and inaugurated the campaign by planting a tree with his hands. The LSO leaders distributed the plants among interested households through member VOs and COs. So all the plants were planted by the community members in their courtyards. The LSO leaders are planning to get more plants from the Forest Department at the time of the next plantation season.



The Deputy Commissioner, Kech, inaugurating the plantation campaign



A community member planting a tree in her courtyard



EUROPEAN UNION

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

More information about the European Union is available on:

Web: eeas.europa.eu/delegations/pakistan_en European Union
Facebook: EUinPakistan
Twitter: EUpakistan

Reported by: Mohammad Ali Azizi, Specialist Social Mobilisation, RSPN
Acknowledgment: Saeed Ahmed, Sr. M&E Officer, Kech and Naseer Ahmed, SMT Incharge, Dasht, NRSP
Edited by: Zahra Rao, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, BRACE, RSPN



Rural Support Programmes Network

IRM Complex, 3rd Floor. Plot# 7, Sunrise Avenue
(Off Park Road), Near COMSATS University,
Islamabad, Pakistan.
Phone: +92-51-8491270-99, Fax: +92-51-8351791
www.rspn.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BRACEProgramme