











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 Wattan

District  Loralai	Union Council  Aghberg	Date of Formation  14-06-2020	Total Households in Union Council  1,689	Organised Households  1,033	Coverage  61%
	Number of COs  95 35 WOMEN • 60 MEN	Number of VOs  22 04 WOMEN • 18 MEN	# of General Body Members  65	# of Executive Committee Members  11 02 WOMEN • 09 MEN	

LSO Wattan, from District Loralai, was formed on June 14th, 2020 by 1,033 member households organised into 95 men and women COs and 22 men and women VOs. The leaders of LSO Wattan 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.

Activities against COVID-19 pandemic

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan and Rural Support Programmes fostered a partnership to combat the disease and the challenges brought on by the pandemic, in collaboration with the organised communities across 1,500 rural union councils from 66 districts. The collaboration between community institutions and the government started in May 2020, with provincial governments taking the lead. BRSP also joined the partnership and built cooperative mechanisms between the LSOs and the government authorities. The leaders of LSO Wattan played their part effectively in this regard. The key activities conducted by the LSO are as under:

1. The community leaders received training from Government Health Department on awareness raising for COVID-19 virus and Trace, Test and Quarantine (TTQ) activities
2. The Community Resource Persons (CRPs) delivered awareness sessions on COVID-19 during their routine

community awareness toolkit (CAT) sessions with Community Organisations (COs). During the sessions, the community members were educated about the signs and symptoms of coronavirus disease, precautionary measures to be taken to keep themselves safe from the viral infection and TTQ measures in case of infected persons in their families and neighbourhood

3. The LSO leaders carried out awareness raising campaigns across the UC through loudspeaker announcements. They educated people on avoiding crowded places, keeping distance, wearing face masks and following all the SOPs recommended by the Government
4. They also made similar announcements frequently on the loudspeakers of local mosques and provided the community members with education and awareness about the pandemic
5. The community activists stitched 900 cloth face masks and distributed them among poor community members, free of cost

As a result of these activities, the people of the area observed the SOPs; so far no cases of infected person have been reported in the UC Aghberg area.



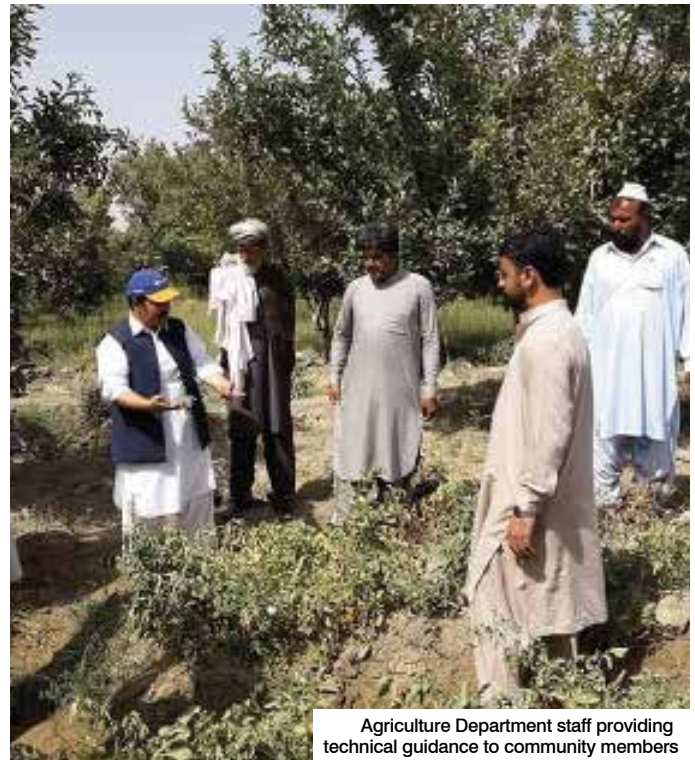
LSO Leaders distributing face masks

Seeking Technical Guidance from Government Agricultural Department

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the local community. The locals grow wheat and vegetables in their fields and maintain fruit orchards. However, due to lack of knowledge about modern agricultural practices, the farmers were not harvesting good yield. Before organising in COs, VOs and LSO under the EU funded BRACE Programme, they were not capacitated to resolve this problem. After getting organised under the three tier community organisations, they discussed the matter in their meeting and decided to visit the Deputy Director Agriculture (DDA) in his office at Loralai town and asked for his guidance and support. The LSO leaders briefed him about their problems, in response to which, the DDA offered to send his staff for their guidance. The field staff of Agriculture Department visited the farm fields and orchards of the community members and advised them to use improved seeds and guided them on controlling pests and insects. Mr. Dad Khan, General Secretary of the LSO said that "this resulted in better crops and a boost in the production of wheat, vegetables and fruits".



Agriculture Department staff providing technical guidance to community members



Agriculture Department staff providing technical guidance to community members

Vaccination of Domestic Livestock by Government Livestock Department

Livestock is the second most important source of livelihood for the local people, it helps in providing milk, yogurt and butter to the family. The yogurt in summer, and butter year-round, remains as essential part of their traditional diet. However foot and mouth disease, a severe, highly contagious viral disease of cloven-hoofed ruminants, like sheep and goat, was quite common in the area. While a majority of affected animals recover, the disease often leaves them weakened and debilitated. Production of milk is severely affected by the disease, causing heavy economic loss and scarcity of essential nutrients for the local people. Earlier, the local people did not know that the government livestock department has facilities and medicines to vaccinate their animals free of cost. However, after formation of the LSO, they developed productive linkages with the Government Line Departments, including the Livestock Department. They met with the Authorities in the Livestock Department, discussed their issue with them and requested for their support in vaccinating their animals against the disease. As a result of this communication, the Livestock Department sent vaccination teams to the villages of UC Aghberg to vaccinate the domestic animals. The LSO leaders coordinated with the concerned VO leaders who announced the vaccination date and venue in advance, so that the community members do not send their animals for grassing and keep them at home. This allowed the vaccination teams to vaccinate all animals on the same day. So far, the Government Livestock Department has vaccinated 1,124 animals from 109 beneficiary households in UC Aghberg. As a result of the vaccination, the spread of the disease has been effectively controlled.

Preparation of National Identity Card

Before the formation of LSO Wattan, the local people had very little understanding about the importance of holding a Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC). When the community members received awareness on the importance of CNIC during the community awareness raising sessions conducted by the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) under the BRACE Programme, they were convinced to get their CNICs made. However, the journey to NADRA office located at the district Head Quarter, was expensive and time consuming. In the cases of women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), a male member had to accompany them, which made the cost of travel even more expensive. To resolve this issue, the LSO leaders coordinated with the NADRA office and sought their support. On the recommendation of a NADRA official, the LSO leaders, in consultation with the concerned VO leaders prepared lists of eligible men and women who needed new CNICs and submitted the list to the NADRA office along with an application for sending their mobile van to their village. NADRA office obliged and sent their mobile van to these villages, and prepared CNICs of eligible people in the village. The concerned VO leaders coordinated with the NADRA staff and helped prepare missing documents of the people. This collaborative effort of the LSO leaders with NADRA resulted in preparation of 230 CNICs of men, women and PWDs at their doorsteps. If these people had to go to NADRA office, each

person would have to spend PKR 2,000 to 3,000 on travel and food cost. Therefore, apart from saving their time and energies, the NADRA mobile van service proved to be extremely cost efficient as it saved around PKR 500,000 of the poor community members which they would have to spend on travel and other cost.

Voter Registration

A transparent, accurate and inclusive voter registration process allows eligible voters to exercise their fundamental civil right to vote, while acting as a safeguard against attempts to manipulate the process. To achieve this, the Election Commission of Pakistan had set up Display Centres in rural areas to facilitate the eligible men and women to register themselves as voter and make corrections in their names according to their CNIC. Previously, people used to show little interest in cooperating with the Election Commission staff. However, after the formation of the LSO under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the members and leaders of the LSO Wattan learned about the importance of casting votes via community awareness raising sessions conducted by CRPs at CO meetings. Therefore, when the Election Commission staff established Display Centres for voter registration in the LSO area, the LSO leaders launched a campaign to motivate all eligible men and women to visit the Election Commission Desk. As a result of this campaign, around 750 men and women visited Election Commission Desks and registered themselves as voters.



LSO members registering themselves as voter at the Election Commission's Display Centre

Enrolment Campaign of Out of School Children

According to UNICEF, 60 to 70% of school-going age children in Balochistan are out of school, including 78% of girls and 67% of boys. One of the main reasons for this is lack of awareness in parents about the importance of basic education for their children. Therefore, when the LSO was established under BRACE

Programme, the community activists realised the urgency of the issue and decided to play their role in creating awareness among parents. The LSO leaders organised rallies in the main villages of the UC and displayed banners carrying slogans about the importance of education for both girls and boys. As a result of their efforts, around 374 out of school children, including 225 boys and 149 girls have been enrolled in Government Schools.



LSO leaders campaigning for enrolment of out of school children



EUROPEAN UNION

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