

# **RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES NETWORK**

## **Guidelines for Formation and Institutional Management of Local Support Organisation Network (LSON)**

**By**

**Mohammad Ali Azizi  
Specialist Social Mobilisation  
Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), Islamabad**

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## **Preface**

Organisation is the first and the far most important principle of Social Mobilisation. Due to its dynamic nature, organisation changes its form and contents according to the ground realities. Federation of COs into VOs at village level and LSOs at UC level was fostered by RSPs in order for them to be able to address wider ranges of socio-economic challenges of their members and to engage with other stakeholders in government and non-government sectors. Gradually, LSOs of certain Tehsils and Districts felt the need for networking for promoting communication and coordination and for building alliances among themselves. RSPN encouraged their initiatives and provided them with some technical and financial support. By the end of August 2012, a total of 14 LSO Networks had been formed, 3 in AKRSP's area, 7 in NRSP's area and 4 in AJKRSP's area. Out of the 14 LSO Networks, 3 are District networks while 11 are Tehsil networks.

Unlike the LSO programme, RSPN or the RSPs have given no specific guidelines on the organisational setting up of LSO Networks. Therefore, despite a consensus on the original idea of LSO Networks in RSP areas, there is currently more than one view on their primary objectives, design and degree of formalisation and the right time to start networking LSOs. This warranted a proper guideline on formation and management of LSO Network. It is a fact that each LSO Network will have its own socio-economic and cultural context that may dictate divergences across them. However, LSONs should have some standardized structures, systems and mechanisms that contribute to improving their organisational functioning and performance. RSPN has prepared this Guideline as part of its support to RSPs and LSOs in formation of LSO Networks.

## **Objectives of the Guidelines**

The purpose of the Guideline is to provide practical help to LSO Network leaders and RSP staff in their effort to form LSO Networks and establish their essential management systems. Whatever has been suggested in this Guideline is a standard that RSPs and LSO Network should strive to achieve and meet. Measurement against this standard will highlight the strengths/weaknesses of LSONs and hence set out a road map for further improvements.

## Chapter 1: Introduction to LSO Network

Networking is a mechanism that brings together people and organisations to pursue some common goals that cannot be undertaken in individual capacities. The form and structure of networks vary according to their objectives, strategies and actions. However, networking amongst non-government organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) is generally required to share information, to coordinate activities and to join forces for such activities that require joint efforts.

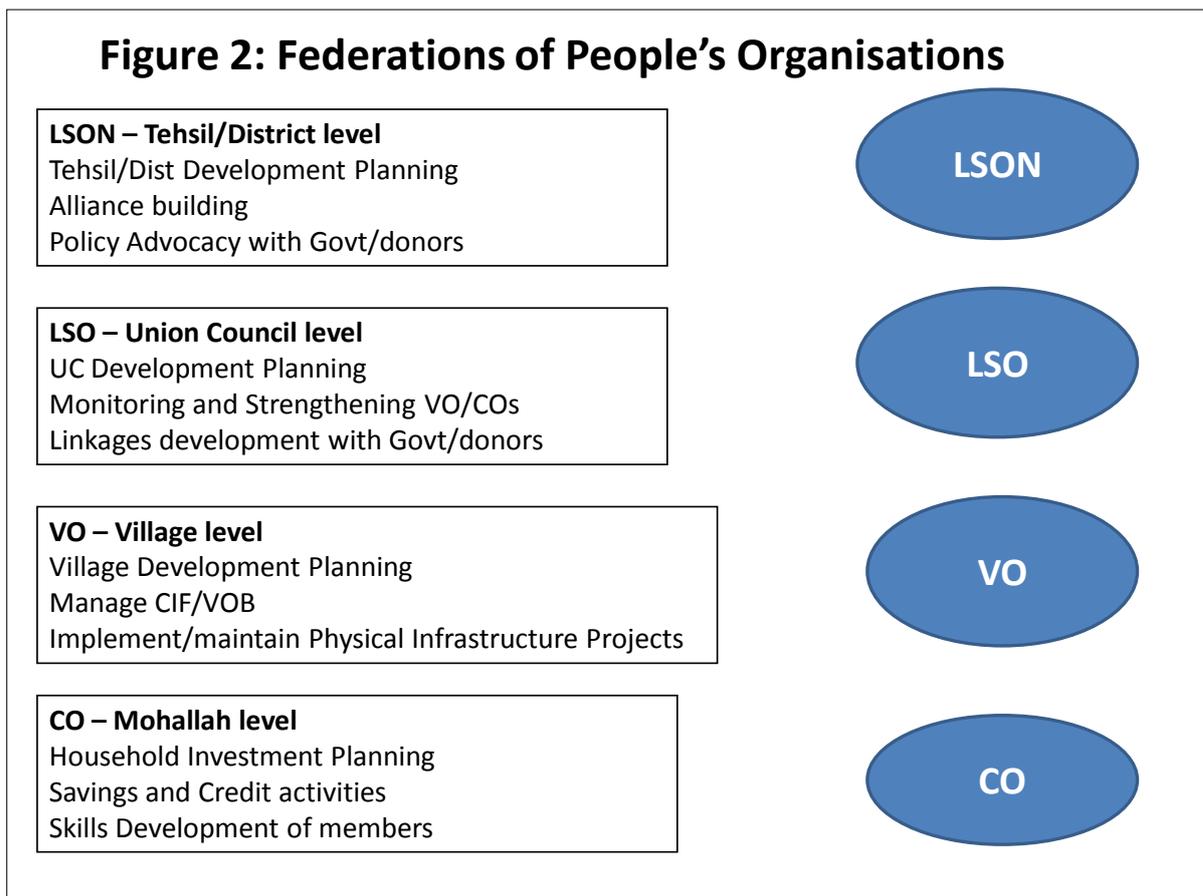
The idea of LSO networking first emerged during a brainstorming session in AKRSP's first LSO Convention held in 2008 at Gilgit. The first LSO Network was formed by LSOs of District Chitral in August 2009, followed by District Ghizer LSO Network in October 2009, with support from RSPN.

LSO Network Ghizer was invited to make a presentation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Convention of LSOs organised by RSPN in December 2009 at Islamabad. Inspired by its ideas, LSOs of other areas also demanded RSPs to facilitate them in the establishment of their networks. In the year 2010, RSPN decided to further test the idea of LSO networking. RSPN provided financial and technical support to Chitral and Ghizer LSO Networks to implement some of their planned activities in 2010. Moreover, RSPN provided both financial and technical support to NRSP to form LSO Networks at Mardan and Turbat and to AJKRSP to form LSO Networks at Muzaffarabad. By the end of August 2012, a total of 14 LSO Networks had been formed, 3 in AKRSP's area, 7 in NRSP's area and 4 in AJKRSP's area. Out of the 14 LSO Networks, 3 are District networks while 11 are Tehsil networks.

**Figure 1: Number of LSONs (as of Sept. 2011)**

<b>Name of RSP</b>	<b>Total LSONs</b>	<b>Dist Level</b>	<b>Tehsil Level</b>	<b>Mem. LSOs</b>
AKRSP	3	2	1	28
AJKRSP	4	0	4	33
NRSP	7	1	6	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>146</b>

RSPN carried out a study in 2011 to analyse the processes and dynamics of LSO networking across Pakistan. The study showed that networking of Local Support Organisations (LSOs) at Tehsil and District levels is the logical next step in institutional development of the multi-tier model of Social Mobilisation fostered by the RSPs to create visibility by federating the Community Organisations (COs) at higher levels, for promoting communication and coordination, for building alliances, and for establishing partnerships with government and other agencies to pursue shared development agendas.



Over the last three years, the Networks have demonstrated considerable impact on creating visibility about the utility of COs/VOs/LSOs in the broader society, gaining recognition as a trusted common platform at Tehsil/District level in order to interact and influence local government and other government line agencies. They have shown their ability to establish linkages with development agencies in government, donors and mobilise development resources from alternative sources. They can not only improve governance and management in member LSOs, but also can promote the culture of transparency, accountability and good governance at Tehsil/District level. Last but not least, they are developing their own action agendas and moving beyond the RSPs’ range of activities.

## **Chapter 2: The Rationale for LSO Networks**

The idea of LSO networking was conceived because of the realisation of the limitations of the efforts of individual LSOs in dealing with complex developmental issues at Tehsil and District levels. The organisational mechanisms of LSOs neither provide space to interact freely with other LSOs nor do they allow for effective interaction with the Tehsil and District level governments. On the other hand LSO Networks not only provide opportunities for LSOs to interact with government at higher levels but also encourage member LSOs to interact, exchange information, dialogue, take joint action amongst themselves and with other civil society organisations, political parties, other mass movements and campaigns etc. The rationale behind formation of LSO Networks therefore is as follows:

**Working with Government:** The Networks could be used as medium to create visibility i.e. taking people's organisations of COs, VO and LSOs to a higher level, and enhancing their voices. The LSO is a UC level body and most of the government organisations do not have their offices below the Tehsil level. Therefore, unless a higher level body is created, the Tehsil and District level government organisations do not take them seriously. Similarly, the Members of Provincial Assemblies (MPAs) and Members of National Assembly (MNAs) and other politicians, larger NGOs, media, private sector agencies and RSPs also can find LSON a cost effective mechanism to reach out to communities.

**Creating a Development Consensus:** Networks could be used as development forums for establishing consensus on development issues. For this purpose, the Network leaders can identify and analyze development opportunities and issues at Tehsil/District levels and articulate shared visions amongst member LSOs and other stakeholders. Thus it can coordinate to establish a common understanding and direction for the Tehsil/District.

**Alliance Building:** Networks could be used as a vehicle to build alliances and partnerships by enhancing interaction between various actors in government, civil society, donors, media etc to address Tehsil/District level development challenges.

**Lobbying and Policy Advocacy:** Networks could be used as a common platform for lobbying and influencing others, like political parties, political leaders, government, media, religious groups, NGO sector, corporate sector etc. for common development agendas and as a force for policy advocacy in favour of the poorest, women and other marginalised groups of the society.

**Information Sharing:** Networks could be instrumental common platforms to LSOs for communication amongst themselves, for mutual learning, action planning and policy advocacy. The Network provides a platform to collect relevant information about development issues and opportunities, lessons learnt and success stories etc. from member organisations as well as from other sources, analyse this and disseminate it amongst member LSO. By doing so, the Networks would also facilitate elaboration and sharpening newer development ideas, visions, and perspectives in development.

**Strengthening Member Organisations:** Networks could enhance effectiveness and sustainability of its member LSOs by enhancing their capacities and promoting their governance and management standards.

**Creating Economies of Scale:** Networks could create economies of scale for their members in various selling and buying activities, like sale of agricultural and dairy products, handicrafts, home-based industries etc. and bulk purchase of fertilizer, seeds and other agricultural inputs, and raw material for home-based industries etc.

## Chapter 3: The Process of LSO Network Formation

Below are some practical guides for formation of LSO Networks:

**Proper ownership by the RSP:** LSO Networking should first be fully owned and formally adopted as the next ascent of social mobilisation by the Board and Management of the RSP. In addition to that, the RSP should allocate resources, both financial and human, to promote LSO Networks in those Tehsils/Districts where LSOs had been formed in majority of UCs.

**Follow a Process Approach:** The LSO Networks should be formed following the organic, pragmatic and sociological approach. Instead of forming a formal structure of LSO Network immediately, the LSO leaders should be allowed to form a working committee for networking initially. They should be given proper time so that they gradually create synergies, mutual understanding and confidence and establish norms for working relationships over time. They should also be made explore reliable alternative sources of funding to cover the overhead costs as well as the costs of core programme functions of the Network before getting into a formal shape.

**Constitution of LSON Team:** The RSP should constitute a local team comprised of at least a social organiser, a monitoring officer and a finance officer to carry out the LSON formation activity systematically. The RSP management should give a written TOR to the Team detailing its roles and responsibilities, expected results of its collective efforts with objectively verifiable indicators and monitoring mechanisms.

**Capacity building of RSP staff:** Networking is a new field for most of the RSP staff. There are no sessions on networking in the existing social mobilisation and other training modules of RSPs, hence no one might had received proper training in LSO networking. Therefore, the LSON team and other relevant staff, including the District Manager, Social Organisers and Field Coordinators should be properly trained in LSO Networking beforehand.

**Situation analysis and compilation of updated Tehsil/District profiles:** The RSP Regional office should carry out a situation analysis and produce a formal report along with updated profiles of the relevant Tehsil or District before initiating LSO Networks.

**Plan of action:** Using the information and data of situation analysis and the TOR, the LSON Team should develop a plan of action for LSON formation.

**Dialogue with LSOs regarding LSON formation:** The Team should discuss the idea of LSON with the leaders of member LSOs through dialogues. Dialogues could be done with individual LSOs or jointly with Executive Committee members of more than one LSO at a mutually agreed venue. Minutes of the dialogues should be recorded and filed.

**Consensus building workshop:** If the Team feels that there is a wider agreement amongst LSOs on formation of the LSO Network, it should organise a workshop to kick start the process after reaching on consensus about its scope of operation, goals and objectives, structure, financing etc.

**Constitution of ad hoc Committee:** The RSP should encourage the LSOs to constitute an ad hoc committee mandated to take forward the process in collaboration with the RSP team. The ad hoc committee should develop the draft bylaws of the LSON and coordinate with the member LSOs.

**Criteria for membership:** Giving membership to newly formed LSOs immediately after their formation could have negative consequences both for the member LSO and the LSO Network. There should be a buffer time for membership till they qualify for it by fulfilling some maturity criteria approved by the LSO Network. In fact the same criteria should be applicable to all LSOs.

**Collection of resolutions from LSOs:** The ad hoc committee should invite resolutions from interested LSOs to join the LSON and nomination of members into the General Body of the LSON.

**Organise LSON formation workshop:** The workshop should be facilitated by the LSON Team of the RSP. The participants of the workshop should be the nominated General Body members of LSON, representatives of Tehsil/District government, Social Welfare Department, government line departments, local Civil Society Organisations and local political and religious leaders. Women's representation must be ensured. The purpose of the workshop should be, 1) to make the participants fully understand the goals and objectives, organisational structure, governance and management systems and core functions of the LSON, 2) to ensure that the participants had properly understood the processes of LSON formation and their due roles and responsibilities, 3) to obtain consensus and agreement from the General Body about formation of the LSON, 4) to select members of Executive Committee by and from General Body and nominate Office Holders through

election/consensus, 6) to pass a resolution to open LSON account into a bank and nomination of bank signatories (men/women), 7) to get agreement on the ToP between the LSON and the RSP after due discussion and get it signed by the representatives of both parties, 8) to finalise the official name of the LSON, the office place and postal address of the LSON, and the financial year of the LSON, 9) to raise funds to meet the initial operational cost of the LSON, 10) to hand over copies of the ToPs to be signed between the member LSOs and the LSON to the leaders of member LSOs with necessary instructions, 11) to record the minutes of the workshop proceedings by the RSP Team and handed over its copy to the LSON leaders.

**Gender equality:** To ensure gender equality, there must be a provision in the bylaws about the ratio of women's membership in the organisational bodies of the LSO Network. For further improving gender equality, 1) gender training should be given for both women and men along with proper follow up by the RSP Team to ensure changes in attitudes, 2) women members should be trained on self-confidence building, 3) affirmative actions should be taken to ensure women's participation, like providing transport and holding meetings at places where women can come easily.

**Avoid overlapping of leadership:** With the view of providing leadership opportunities to a maximum number of people, the LSO Network may recommend their office holders to relinquish their posts from their LSOs/VOs. Exception could be allowed in special circumstances, like lack of properly skilled persons in the lower tiers. This would be a strategic move to control certain influential and political figures in the LSON as well as LSOs.

**Vigilant eye on influential leaders:** Experience shows that influential and political figures are get elected in the top leadership of the LSON. Besides their positive roles in winning recognition and support of political parties and personalities, there will be the risk of hijacking the Network by them. Therefore, RSPs would need to keep a more vigilant eye on such people.

**LSON Records:** The following records should be maintained by the LSON: 1) Minutes Book, 2) ToPs, 3) List of General Body and Executive Committee members, 4) Profiles of Tehsil/District, 5) Profiles of member LSOs, 6) Receipt Book, 7) Cash Book, 8) General Ledger.

**Capacity building of LSO Network leaders:** Capacity building in core functions of networking would be an urgent and serious issue. The RSP should undertake capacity need

assessment exercises to systematically identify the capacity building needs of LSON leaders and then plan and implement capacity building programmes for them with their full engagement.

**Adopt cheaper means of communication:** Communication will be a key function of the Network. They should consider the below mentioned cheaper forms of communications to remain engaged with its members, stakeholders and the general masses. 1) text messaging urgent information, 2) emailing minutes of meetings and other important decisions or information 3) publication of newsletters 4) publication of key decisions and information in local print media 5) putting up information outside the LSON offices on a public notice board.

**Financial record keeping and audit:** Financial record keeping is the key determinant of transparency and accountability. Therefore, LSO Networks should take it seriously and maintain an official receipt book, a cash book and a ledger to record its financial transactions systematically according to accounting standards and rules. Moreover, audit is a legal requirement for all registered firms and a crucial means of ensuring transparency and accountability and winning the confidence of members and public at large. Till the time that the LSOs and LSONs become financially able to get their accounts audited from recognised auditing firms, the RSPs should audit their accounts regularly. On the other hand, the LSO Network is going to be the leading civil society organisation to promote the cause of transparency and accountability across government organisations, NGOs and even in private sector organisations at Tehsil/District level. Therefore, they should first put their own house in order.

**Support in establishing working relationships with government departments:** In order for establishing working relationships and partnership between the LSO Network and external agencies, the RSP should arrange briefing meetings of LSO Networks with government departments, Civil Society Organisations and donors.

**Monitoring:** Monitoring of LSO Network will be a new activity for the RSP staff. Therefore, they may not have the capacity to carry out proper monitoring and supervision of the LSO Networks. RSPs should develop monitoring formats and train the relevant staff in monitoring of LSO Networks.

**LSON Byelaws:** Ideally, the draft bylaws should be ready before the LSON formation workshop. Otherwise they should develop it and get it approved by its General Body as soon

as possible. Copy of the approved bylaws should be shared with member LSOs and other stakeholders.

## **Chapter 4: Governance System of the LSO Network**

Networks are generally of two types: a) informal, with no bylaws, organisational rules and offices and b) Semi formal, with more defined organisational structures, governed by bylaws and set procedures and, and c) formal with defined organizational structure, written bylaws and registered. The organisational style is primarily based on the types of goals and objectives the Network wants to pursue. If the Network resolves to do only communication amongst members and other stakeholders, then an informal structure is more suitable. On the other hand, if the Network decides to carry out multiple tasks, especially the implementation of projects, then it must have a more formal structure and a bank account. Since LSOs are multifunctional organisations, their network will eventually be a formal organisation.

However, in the initial stage, the network could be formed as an informal body mainly for communication and coordination among member LSOs. In the case of formal organisation, the LSO Network can consider to adopt a two-tiered organisational structure i.e. a General Body and an Executive Body.

**The General Body:** This will be the supreme authority of the Network. All major decisions will be made and approved by it. Each LSO will nominate an equal number of members to the LSON General Body, usually 2 members. The members should be nominated for a two year period. Re-nomination of the same members after two years could be allowed. The LSOs should adopt some criteria for the selection of General Body member, 1) minimum age limit, 2) minimum literacy level, 3) be a permanent resident of the UC, 3) be an active member in his/her own LSO etc.

**The Executive Committee:** This is elected from and by the members of the General Body of the LSON. The main responsibility of the Executive Committee is to implement decisions taken by the General Body. The nomination criteria for Executive Committee members could be: 1) a minimum age limit, 2) a minimum literacy level, 3) be a member of General Body, 4) be known for honesty, trustworthiness and general good character, 5) good communication skills.

The Executive Committee elects from its members a cabinet which commonly consist of: 1) President, 2) Vice President, 3) General Secretary, 4) Joint Secretary, 5) Finance/office Secretary and 6) a Press Secretary. The remaining members are ordinary members. However, the cabinet does not meet and take decisions on its own. In fact, all Executive Committee members participate in monthly and other meetings.

**Special Committees:** The Executive Committee can form special committees to carry out specific functions. Members could be nominated both from the Executive Committee and

General Body. The special committees have only advisory roles. Their recommendations need to be approved by the Executive Committee and/or by the General Body

## **Chapter 5: Management Systems of the LSO Network**

Being a formal organisation, LSO Network will require a set of formal management systems which has been briefly discussed here.

**Management policies:** Besides the bylaws, the Networks will have to develop management policies and procedures, like for finance and audit, gender mainstreaming, project management and monitoring etc, which they will have to develop in future once they are properly established and start doing projects. These are considered as essential capacity and management standards for formal civil society organisations.

**Office Management:** The LSO Networks should initially operate from any LSO office. Alternatively, member LSOs should host LSO Network in their office on turn, say for one year. In this way they would be able to save a significant portion of their overhead costs. The third option could be to share the rented accommodation of one of its member LSOs. But eventually they will have to set up their separate office after securing necessary financial arrangement to pay the office costs. The General Secretary will mainly be responsible for the official records of the Network. The Network should have necessary furniture, computers, equipment and file racks etc. for smooth operation of its office.

**Financial Management:** The LSO Networks should generate funds from member LSOs as membership fee and should also explore other permanent sources of income to cover their overhead cost. The Network should also generate funds, both from internal and external resources to fund its programme costs. The Finance Secretary will safe keep cash and financial records besides maintaining financial records. The bank account, once opened must be operated jointly by the President and the Finance Secretary.

## **Chapter 6: Capacity building of LSO Network leaders**

In order for smooth operations and achieving its goals and objectives, the LSO Network leaders should be able to run their organisation properly. The following will be the capacity areas for the LSO Network:

Office management

Financial record keeping

Planning and budgeting

Communication (collection, analysis and dissemination of development information among member organisations, stakeholders, media and across the wider civil society)

Lobbying/ influencing others (political parties, political leaders, media, religious groups, NGO sector, corporate sector, local government etc.)

Consensus building (identifying and analysing opportunities and issues and articulating shared visions and solutions)

Alliance and partnership building (enhancing interactions between various actors – civil society, media, donors, government etc.)

Membership management (keeping the members active, making them accountable, contributing in their activities without controlling them)

## **Chapter 7: Financial viability of the LSO Network**

Networking tends to be costly both in terms of time and money. However, the costs of networking are often treated as overheads. Therefore research studies<sup>1</sup> suggest that financing networking is often found to be problematic, because the practice of networking is more or less invisible and in most cases it is difficult to pinpoint its direct effects or to measure its value. Therefore, donors find it difficult to allocate funds for ‘invisible’ non-project purposes. This is particularly sensitive if lobbying and policy negotiations are prime objectives on the network’s agenda. Hence, networking NGOs often prefer to rely as much as possible on their own resources.

The most common issue of the study LSOs is financing. The prospects of getting funds from external donors for their core networking activities are quite bleak. Following are some options for their financial viability.

Keep their structure lean and mean. Instead of setting up a formal registered body with offices, furniture and equipment, set up a working committee consisting of a selected number of activists from member LSOs who have capacity, time and commitment to carry out networking activities. Instead of establishing separate office, use existing office space and equipment of one of its member LSOs and reimburse the actual expenses to the LSO. Alternatively, member LSOs could host the LSO Networks in their office in turn free of cost.

If formal structure seemed inevitable, then the member LSOs must be asked to pay annual fee to the Network to compensate its overhead cost.

In either cases, member LSOs must contribute in implementation of networking projects, like lobbying campaigns, fund raising meetings, proposal development cost etc.

The Networks should prepare their annual plans carefully and avoid stretching beyond their means.

The Network should operate in a decentralized mode. They should always be ready to transfer as many activities to member LSOs as possible. Moreover, they should encourage direct interface between member LSOs so that maximum networking activities and information flows are conducted by the member LSOs themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP, (May 2000) [A Practical Guide to NGO Networking](#)

## Annex 1: Sample Objectives of LSO Networks

Objectives are the most important element of an organisation. Below are given objectives of three LSO Networks for guidance. An important point of interest is to see the commonalities in them as well as variations that reflect their specific socio economic and cultural diversities:

<b>Dist. LSON Rawalakot, AJK</b>	<b>Tehsil LSON Dargai, Malakand, KPK</b>	<b>Tehsil LSON, Muzaffarabd, AJK</b>
1) Support in the formation of new LSOs	1) To provide a joint platform to LSOs for mutual communication and coordination	1) Scaling up social mobilisation through low cost, self-sustained measures
2) Capacity building of member LSOs in weak management areas	2) To communicate and coordinate with governmental/non-governmental organizations to promote community development, transparency and accountability and good governance at Tehsil level	2) Advocacy of basic rights
3) Motivate and activate member LSOs to perform better	3) To act as voice of the community and play role of advocacy through identifying issues, gathering facts and figures and communicating to the relevant quarters for necessary action	3) Monitoring of member LSOs
4) Facilitate coordination between LSOs and other civil society organisations and government agencies	4) To submit funding proposals to the development/donor agencies on behalf of LSOs and channelize resources to respective LSOs	4) Financial audit of LSOs
5) Information and experience sharing between member LSOs	5) To provide technical guidance and advisory support to the LSOs in order to make them dynamic, effective, efficient and sustainable using their available resources	5) Promote the cause of gender equality
6) Support in conflict resolution within and between member LSOs as well as between LSOs and other stakeholders	6) To guide the LSOs in order to serve their communities in transparent manner	6) Facilitate development linkages between government, donors and private sector agencies and the local communities
7) Organise district/Tehsil level meetings/workshops to discuss development issues	7) To motivate and support the LSOs in scaling up of social mobilization	7) Provide an institutionalised mechanism for self-help and self-reliance

and to promote cooperation with government, donors, other civil society organisations and private sector		in local communities
8) Develop Tehsil/district level development plans with the participation of representatives from district government, government line departments , other civil society organisations and donors and incorporate them into district government budget and programmes of government line agencies and donors	8) To monitor LSO activities and achievements in development interventions	8) Proper and efficient use of natural and human resources
9) Disseminate research findings of government and other organisations among member LSOs	9) To motivate and assist communities to establish new LSOs in uncovered UCs	9) Capacity building of LSOs regarding record Keeping, office establishment and linkages Development
10) Support member LSOs in their annual planning and incorporate them in district government budget	10) To assist LSOs in project proposals for submission to donor agencies	10) Registration of LSOs
11) Monitoring of programme activities and management of member LSOs	11) To carry out policy advocacy through identifying common issues, raising them with the relevant quarters in government and donor agencies for necessary actions	11) Linkages and coordination between member LSOs
	12) To promote the involvement of youth and women in development activities	12) Advocacy for pro-poor policies by strengthening civic participation in government planning
	13) To motivate and guide LSOs to provide social protection activities to the poorest and destitute	

## **Annex 2: Output of Group Work in SMRT meeting on the LSO Network**

In the 11<sup>th</sup> SMRT meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011 at Islamabad, the participants discussed LSO Network in detail. The participants of the SMRT meeting was divided into two groups and asked to discuss and answer ten strategic questions regarding LSO Networking. The group work was presented into a plenary session and further discussed to come up with final version. Below is the outcome of the group work:

### **Basis of LSON formation: When to Form LSON?**

At least 50% UCs have formed LSOs

Need-based and demand-led

Differentiated approach in rural and urban areas, with preference for rural-based LSONs

### **Representation of Members in LSON: should other CSOs also become member of LSON?**

Other CSOs should not be included in the formal structure of LSON to avoid

Risks of capture and hijacking the network by influential CSOs

Issues of ownership and agreeing to the ethos and objectives of Social Mobilisation

Alliance building and federations with other CSOs should be encouraged through other forums-existing or need-based, where LSON represents in the network.

### **Geographic Spread: should the LSON be at Tehsil or District level?**

Any level, need-based, depending on the size and number of UCs/LSOs in the Tehsil or District.

Gradual, organic process should be followed

### **Purpose: should the LSO be single purpose or multipurpose?**

Multipurpose: below are some examples of LSON purposes:

Voice

Representation

Communication and information sharing

Training and capacity building

Resource mobilisation

Alliance building

Advocacy

### **Activities: what activities the LSON should take up?**

No direct involvement in project/program implementation

Social mobilization through alliance building with other CSOs and actors

Lobbying and advocacy with government and elected representatives

Monitoring and evaluation of LSOs activities and public sector development plans and programs

Communication and information sharing

Capacity building of Network members including legal support

Resource mobilization for LSOs

Conflict resolution

### **Organizational structures: should the structure be formal or informal?**

Start with informal structure and gradually make it formal according to requirement

There should be formal structure of LSON at District level, while the Tehsil level network could be informal. The reason is that most of the government systems work at District level.

### **Division of responsibilities between LSOs and LSON**

LSON is responsible for resource mobilization, linkages with local government (LSON should communicate with District Officer and district line departments in order to avoid a parallel organisation and acceptance from district government)

LSON should do upward advocacy to reform policies and divert funds to poor and women, and also promote downward social mobilization to ensure proper utilization of the resources by member organisations.

Communication – written minutes in local language from LSON to LSO to ensure downward accountability

LSOs are responsible for social mobilisation and implementation

### **Contribution of members LSOs to LSON**

LSOs will contribute preferably for operational cost to LSON (which includes office rent, utilities, staff salary) – membership fees to become a part of the LSON. Also consultancy charges if the LSON carries out an activity for the LSO or carries out a service, i.e. proposal writing.

### **Elite Capture: how to avoid elite capture and ensure spread of information among all four tiers?**

All segments of society should be involved – but proceed with caution

Follow basic principles of Social Mobilisation i.e. regular meeting, decisions in meetings, written record of minutes and financial matters at all level

**Monitoring of LSON by RSPs: what to monitor and how?**

Monitor Programme, financial record keeping, and resource mobilization process

Provide technical support to LSON