



### 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.

### LSO Initiatives

## LSO Support and Development Association

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Date of Formation:                              | 5 December, 2004 |
| District:                                       | Skardu           |
| Union Council:                                  | Hussainabad      |
| Total Households in Union Council:              | 903              |
| Organised Households:                           | 743              |
| Coverage:                                       | 82%              |
| No of Village Development Organisations (VDOs): | 3 (all mixed)    |
| No of Village Organisations (VOs):              | 27 (8 women's)   |
| No of General Body Members:                     | 38 (14 women)    |
| No of Executive Committee Members:              | 11 (2 women)     |

### SAWERA SEWING CENTER

In the recent past, a number of women from poor families have received tailoring training to earn some income to support their families. However, due to fierce competition from professional tailoring houses in the area, the majority of them failed to earn any income from tailoring. The LSO, therefore, initiated the Sawera Sewing Centre in February 2011 as a social enterprise. Under this project, a production center was established where initially 10 women from as many poor families have been employed. The center takes orders from wholesalers of school uniforms from the main Skardu market, buys raw material from Faisalabad and produces finished products for garment houses at wholesale rates. The total investment in the center is Rs. 600,000, out of which 50% has been invested by the LSO while the remaining 50% has been provided by two private investors. One of the partners is a professional tailor, and has been appointed as the supervisor of the production center, while the other partner specialises in marketing and has been made responsible for





procurement of raw material from down country and the marketing of finished products. The LSO receives 30% of net profit while the partners receive 35% of the net profit.

The women tailors earn Rs. 4,000 to 5,000 per month, a reasonable regular income to support their families. The LSO and its partners expect to earn 15% to 20% on their investments on an annual basis. In other words, the LSO will earn around Rs. 50,000 annually from this social enterprise.

#### **SADA HONEY BEE FARM**

The LSO contacted the Hashoo Foundation for the provision of honey bee boxes and training to its members. The LSO established the SADA Honey Bee Farm in April 2011. A Honey Bee Production Group comprising of 20 couples, from as many local poor families were nominated based on their poverty level and interest. The Hashoo Foundation arranged a week-long training for the Honey Bee Group members in April 2011. After the training, 80 Honey Bee boxes (4 per family) and tools were provided to the group.

The honey is collected in the presence of the group leader and other interested members and after weighing, it is handed over to the marketing people. The honey collected from each member is properly documented. The LSO receives 5% commission on the total production. Due to cold climatic conditions, the honey making season is very short, around 3 months, in the area. Therefore, the production is relatively low. Despite this, the LSO received Rs. 15,000 as commission income last year. The commission income is expected to increase in the future because the honey bee members will increase the number of their honey bee colonies over the

years. Moreover, 20 additional families will receive 80 more boxes this year. So by the third year, the LSO is expecting to earn around Rs. 40,000 as commission income from the honey bee enterprise, besides providing a reasonable annual income to 40 poor member families.

#### **FRUIT DEHYDRATION PLANT**

The area is rich in high value perishable fruits of mulberry and apricot. But due to the lack of proper dehydration plants, only 5% of the total production is dried properly for marketing. LSO SADA submitted a proposal for the construction of solar dehydration plants to the USAID funded Small Grants and Ambassador Fund Program (SGAFP). SGAFP has approved its proposal, under which 4 dehydration plants at 4 different localities of the union council will be established. The total cost of the project is Rs. 11.9 million, in which the LSO's share is Rs. 3.7 million and SGAFP will provide Rs. 8.2 million for the construction of the dehydration plants and training of the plant operators by the Skardu chapter of the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR).

Each dehydration plant has the capacity to dry 1,000 kg of fruits in 3 normal sunny days. The fruit dehydration season in Baltistan is around 8 weeks. Therefore, the 4 plants will be able to process around 64 tons of high quality dry fruits every year.

The LSO will establish 4 production units, one for each plant. The production units will be responsible for the management and maintenance of the plants. The project will be able to increase the farm income of the poor farmers of the area. The LSO will receive a modest commission on the net profit of the operations on an annual basis.

