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

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.
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.