

LSO Initiatives

LSO Jharkal

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.

The LSO

District: Khushab, Punjab
Union Council: Noorpur Thall
Total Households in Union Council: 3,315
Organised Households: 3,195
Coverage: 96%
Number of Village Organisations (VOs): 8 mixed VOs
Number of Community Organisations (COs): 232 (76 men's COs, 137 women's COs and 19 mix COs)
Number of General Body Members: 37 (27 men and 10 women)
Number of Executive Body Members: 15 (9 men and 6 women)

The Initiatives

ESTABLISHMENT OF ENGLISH-MEDIUM SCHOOL

The LSO formed an English-medium school in 2009 through its own funds at a cost of Rs. 280,000, by purchasing and obtaining donated land and constructing the school building by themselves. The need for a school arose because the nearest school to

the communities was nine kilometres away, resulting in the fact that many children were not being sent to school. At the moment, the school has 50 children (of which 20 are girls) who are being educated till class six. The school has four teachers, including its principal. The school charges a fee of Rs. 100 per student per month.

STIPENDS FOR THE POOREST

The LSO has supported the poorest of households in its communities in availing provincial and national government social security programmes. It has obtained funds for its members from the Zakat Committee¹ to support eight poor households in completing their daughters' dowries, obtained support for 325 people from Bait-ul-Maal², obtained membership

¹ Zakat is an obligatory payment made annually under Islamic law on certain kinds of property and used for charitable and religious purposes. The Zakat Committee is a Government committee which manages and decides how collected Zakat should be spent.

² Bait-ul-Maal is an autonomous body set up through the 1991 Act. It aims to alleviate poverty by focussing on the poorest of the poor by providing them with social protection.

into the Punjab Food Stamp Scheme for 56 households and attained Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) support for 570 poor women. BISP is the largest social protection programme in Pakistan and provides Rs. 1,000 (nearly \$12) to poor women per month in order to help them meet their monthly expenditure.

SUPPORT TO THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY CHALLENGED

The LSO has worked hard to provide help and support to those individuals who are physically and mentally challenged. It has supported 47 people to get their disability certificates from the government. As a result, three of those people have also obtained government jobs. In addition to this, the LSO has been able to ensure the admission of 25 children into the government's special education programmes.

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

The LSO carried out a "Walk for Education", in which members of the LSO walked throughout the main bazaars of the union council. As a result of the walk, a total of 325 girls and 430 boys were admitted into schools.



A lady doctor in the LSO managed Dispensary

MANAGEMENT OF DISPENSARY

Through the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), funds for a dispensary were provided (for its establishment and operational costs). The LSO has been managing the dispensary for the past year, with another year of PPAF support left. The LSO, in addition to managing the dispensary, is also making strides in trying to expand the services available to patients. For example, the LSO has recently obtained an X-Ray machine from the Share Society. In addition to this, it is in the process of obtaining an ambulance from an NGO called "Khidmat-e-Khalq".

EMERGENCY TRANSPORT

Although striving to obtain an ambulance, the LSO decided to make alternative arrangements in the mean time. The LSO provides transportation to the households in its villages in case of emergency, especially when of a medical nature. As medical clinics and hospitals tend to be in town, people from the villages have trouble accessing them quickly, especially at night when there is a scarcity of public transportation. Therefore, the LSO has assigned one taxi and its driver for each of its villages. These taxi drivers are members of the LSO and are on call at night. They charge their passengers nominal fees and that too only after the household has passed its emergency.



Enayatullah, 30, now a government employee, with his disability certificate