



LSO Initiatives

# Society Development Foundation

## 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: Bagh, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK)  
Union Council: Rawali  
Total Households in Union Council: 3,577  
Organised Households: 2,666  
Coverage: 75%  
Number of Village Organisations (VOs): 16 mixed VOs  
Number of Community Organisations (COs): 151 (70 men's COs, 69 women's COs and 12 mix COs)  
Number of General Body Members: 125 (71 men and 54 women)  
Number of Executive Body Members: 24 (14 men and 10 women)

## The Initiatives

### STIPENDS FOR THE POOREST

The LSO carried out a survey in its union council to find out how many widows and women-headed households there were. 50 were identified as the poorest and facilitated to obtain Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) stipends. Before the BISP initiative was changed (to identifying beneficiaries through the Poverty Scorecard), beneficiaries

would be identified through a quota system given to Ministers. These government representatives would then identify beneficiaries in their constituencies. At that time, the LSO petitioned these officials to ensure that stipends were provided to those women who had been identified in their survey.

### TRAINING FOR OTHER LSOs

The LSO was provided the task of giving various training sessions to surrounding LSOs, in LSO management, record-keeping and developing village development plans. The LSO also was assigned the task of carrying out the Poverty Scorecard survey in two neighbouring union councils by the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) in order to ascertain the level of poverty in those areas.

### RECYCLING WASTE

The LSO has taken a lead in ensuring that its pristine environment is maintained. To this end, besides carrying out extensive forest plantations, the LSO has also started recycling waste. It has provided awareness-raising sessions to its member COs about the benefits of recycling.





Asma, 24 - an avid recycler of bottles into decoration-items and paper into envelopes

As a result, several of the households in the union council recycle different waste material e.g. medicinal bottles. Having used the medicines, households clean the bottle and return it to the pharmaceutical stores. In return, they are provided with Rs. 2-5 per bottle. The same is also true for other glass bottles, which are sold to various shops. In addition to this, the LSO has provided its members with training on how to make shopping bags out of cloth, in order to discourage the use of plastic bags. Along with being environmentally friendly, these cloth bags are preferred by shoppers in the union council because they are stronger than plastic bags and last longer over the period of long walks to and fro from the bazaar. Several women members in the LSO now make these bags and sell them on a regular basis in the bazaar, at prices ranging from Rs. 20-50.

#### OLD BOOK CENTRE

The LSO realised that the poor children in the union council were not able to pursue their studies because of their inability to afford school books.

In order to combat this, the LSO now actively collects school books from students who no longer require them at the end of each academic year. The books are then provided to less advantaged children entering those grades in the coming academic year. So far, a total of 225 children have been provided with entire book sets for their classes for one academic year.



A meeting in front of the LSO office

“The LSO has provided its members with training on how to make shopping bags out of cloth, in order to discourage the use of plastic bags. Along with being environmentally friendly, these cloth bags are preferred by shoppers in the union council because they are stronger than plastic bags and last longer over the period of long walks to and fro from the bazaar.”