

LSO Initiatives: Local Support Organisation Darnouian

ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Proper planning is a prerequisite for achievement of organisational goals and objectives. However, planning is not an easy task. It requires proper capacity and full commitment of the organisational management and active participation of beneficiary members. Therefore, very few grassroots organisations maintain a culture of proper planning. Research studies and field observations of the LSOs also reveal that a majority of them do not have proper plans in hand.

Keeping these factors in mind, the Rawalpindi region of the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) has initiated a plan to ensure proper planning by all COs, VOs and LSOs in their programme area. Under this project, NRSP has developed planning formats at each level of CO, VO and LSO. They then provide training to VO and LSO leaders in development planning. The trained activists then help COs, VOs and the LSO in preparing their annual plans in a participatory manner.

In the case of LSO Darnouian, NRSP trained the President, Manager and a woman member of its 10 VOs. Since the same trained activists are also members of the LSO, there was no need for a separate training for the LSO leaders. After receiving training and planning materials, the trained activists of each VO first supported their member COs in preparation of their Micro Investment Plans (MIPs). The UC has three revenue villages and ten villages. The VOs are formed at village level. However to save time and resources, they decided to develop annual plans of their VOs at revenue village level. So instead of developing 10 different Village Plans, they developed three plans and incorporated the development plans of individual VOs separately under the revenue village plans. This integration of VO plans into revenue village plans is expected to help smooth cooperation and coordination across villages.

In the light of the CO and VO plans, the LSO leaders then developed the Union Council Development Plan. This systematic planning process helped gauge the communication gaps between the three tiers.

Another unique feature of the planning process is that it has activities at three levels. At the first level all activities are 100% self-help based. These are targeted activities to support the poorest, destitute and physically and mentally-challenged people and families. The second level activities are planned on a 50:50 cost sharing basis, i.e. 50% cost will be met from internal sources while the remaining 50% will be received from external sources. These are projects to support women members of the community. The third level activities are planned at a 20:80 cost sharing ratio. These are mainly physical infrastructure schemes.

The LSO members are very happy with the planning outcomes and they seemed fully determined to execute 100% programmes and projects planned under level 1 and 2 and around 80% activities planned under level 3. They had already identified various internal sources of fund raising.

Date of Formation:
2 July, 2008

District
Rawalpindi

Union Council
**Darnouian,
Kotli Sattian**

Total Households
in Union Council
1,212

Organised
Households
720

Coverage
59%

No of Community
Organisations (COs)
58
13 women's COs

No of General
Body Members
25
12 women's

No of Executive
Committee Members
10
3 women

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.





DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The LSO leaders maintain a good working relationship with the Local Government. Every year, they identify rural infrastructure schemes and other development projects on a priority basis. They then take up these issues with the Local Government authorities at the union council (UC), Tehsil and District level according to the nature of the development issues. In this way they manage to incorporate their development demands into the annual development budgets of these councils. Since the formation of the LSO in 2008, they have implemented four link roads, two trail paths, six water tanks and three hand pump projects in different villages with the financial support of the local councils.



ROOF WATER HARVESTING PROJECT

Water for drinking, cleaning and irrigation, is the scarcest commodity in these hilly areas. The level of underground water is also going deeper and deeper due to over pumping. Therefore, creation of alternative sources of water is extremely useful and profitable for the people of the area.

In the year 2010, the LSO entered into a development partnership with the Sustainable Livelihoods Barani Area Project (SLBAP). SLBAP provided technical support and the cost of essential materials for a Roof Water Harvesting Project. Under this project, 110 households which had tin-roofed houses were provided pipes and plastic tanks for storage of rain water from their roofs. Besides providing valuable clean water at their doorsteps, the project reduced the work load of women who previously would have to collect water from as far as two to three kilometres.

ESTABLISHING DEVELOPMENT LINKAGES WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Establishing linkages with external agencies is essential for accessing external resources for local development. However, development of linkages is not an easy task. In fact, linkage development is a key indicator of institutional maturity of the grassroots organisations, because external agencies support only to those organisations who demonstrate a critical level of transparency and accountability and management capacity in implementation, financial record keeping, monitoring, reporting and maintenance of completed projects. The development activities carried out by the LSO through linkages speaks volumes about its institutional capacity in carrying out different types of development projects to the satisfaction of the donors and the community at large. The table below shows a summarised list of the development activities carried out by the LSO with financial support of external donors.

