



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 VO. 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 Kohsar Welfare Society Kairala

Support to the Poor

Supporting poor members is one of the core activities of the LSO and it has taken several self-initiated steps in this regard. Two examples of this are:

1. It came to the notice of the LSO leaders that there were three grown up girls in the area who were unable to get married because their families were very poor and could not afford to purchase dowry and pay for other ceremonial expenses. The LSO leaders raised Rs. 165,000 from LSO members and wealthy families of the area and arranged their marriages.
2. Treatment of cancer is very expensive and therefore inaccessible to poor families. The LSO raises funds to assist poor patients suffering from cancer. So far,

Date of Formation: 15 December, 2008		
District: Kotli	Union Council: Kairala Majhan	
Total Households in Union Council: 3,200	Organised Households: 2,460	Coverage: 77%
No of Community Organisations (COs): 108 35 women's	No of Village Organisations (VOs): 7 All mixed	No of General Body Members: 97 42 women's
		No of Executive Committee Members: 12 6 women's

they have helped three poor cancer patients by collecting funds from members of the LSO General Body and other well off families.

Medical Camps for Eye Patients

Poverty prevents many people from seeking treatment for cataract, which can cause permanent blindness. At times when they do seek treatment, complications during surgery lead to long-term financial and physical burdens for them. Therefore, the LSO organises eye medical camps in the UC in collaboration with Meo Hospital Lahore. They had, so far, arranged eight eye camps. Around 360 patients had been successfully treated during these camps.



Re-vitalisation of School Management Committees

There are 16 government schools in the UC. The LSO realised that the School Management Committees of these schools were not elected on merit. Therefore, they were not fulfilling their duties properly. The LSO held meetings with the Head Teachers of the schools, shared their concerns with them and convinced them for re-vitalisation of the School Management Committees in a transparent manner. As a result of these efforts, the LSO was able to not only re-

organise these committees but also induct its General Body members in these committees. This simple yet strategic initiative has led to clear improvements in the facilities and management of the schools and consequently in the quality of education.

Linkages with Government and Donors for Funding Rural Infrastructures

The topography of the UC is mainly mountainous, therefore, roads and other communication facilities are extremely important physical infrastructure for the local inhabitants. In this regard, the LSO leaders try their best in raising resources for construction of new roads and repair and maintenance of existing ones. The LSO contacted their elected member of Kashmir Council and obtained funds from him for construction of a 1.5 kilometre new link road and for soling of one kilometre shingle road. With the technical and financial support of AJK CDP, the LSO managed construction of 5 kilometre long street pavement, 8 kilometre long street soling and 10,500 feet long walkways. In addition to that, the LSO also constructed earthquake proof buildings for two government school and two first aid posts, two biogas plants and trained around 200 women in employable skills with the financial support of AJK CDP.

