

LSO Initiatives:

Local Support Organisation Beer Haripur



Chairman LSO Beer

Date of Formation:
May, 2003

District
Haripur

Union Council
Beer

Total Households
in Union Council
4,150

Organised
Households
3,171

Coverage
76%

No of Community
Organisations (COs)
117
52 women's

No of General
Body Members
154
All men

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.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Financial viability is the key determining factor of an LSO's sustainability. LSO Beer has been successfully mobilising financial resources from various internal sources not only to meet its operational expenses but also for expanding its development mandate. Some examples are:

1. Social Enterprise: Maize is the major second crop of the area. Procurement of certified seed is one of the key problems of the local farmers. The LSO, therefore, decided to promote production of certified maize seed locally with the dual purpose of providing quality seed at reasonable prices to the local farmers and earning a reasonable profit for its financial sustainability. The LSO makes some advance payments to the progressive farmers of the area and books "A" quality maize seed. It pays the full amount after procurement of the seed. The LSO then sells the certified "A" quality seed to the local whole sellers and thus ensures availability of quality seed in the local market. Last year, the LSO earned a reasonable amount of Rs. 154,000 from this social enterprise.
2. Training of community activists: A number of General Body members of the LSO are good trainers in social mobilisation. Their speciality is teaching principles and practices of social mobilisation using local language, local experiences and examples and emphasising on practical methods. Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Sungi Development Foundation and other organisations send community activists for training to the LSO. The LSO also efficiently bargains with local hotel owners regarding rent and food of trainees. The General Body members provide the training free of cost. Thus, the LSO manages to make a considerable saving on each training event. During the last calendar year, the LSO earned Rs. 1.4 million from various training courses.
3. Consultancy services by LSO staff: The LSO hires highly qualified staff to manage its development programmes sponsored by donors. Whenever they get a chance, the LSO allows its staff to offer consultancy services to other interested NGOs by paying 30% of their consultancy income to the LSO. In a good year, the LSO earns around Rs. 2 million from consultancy fees of its staff.

POLICY ADVOCACY

In Union Council Beer, around 1,200 families residing in 8 villages had no drinking water supply facilities. Traditionally, fetching drinking water, both for human and animal consumption is a woman's duty in the area. Therefore, women of the area were under immense workload.

The LSO invited Senator Talat Mehmood to visit their area and briefed him about the plight of the women. They showed pictures of women carrying heavy loads of water for long distances. Due to this policy advocacy effort, the Senator was fully convinced and he met with the then Prime Minister and obtained a special grant for provision of drinking water to all 8 villages from the Prime Minister's Special Initiative grant.

On the recommendation of the LSO, the Senator implemented the project through the Public Health Department. However, the Senator nominated the LSO for monitoring of the project through a special directive. The LSO formed a monitoring committee comprising of the Chairman and two Executive Body members. The committee assured quality of the pipes and their proper fitting. On the other hand, the LSO resolved conflicts and issues over excavation of land for laying the pipelines. The project needed a 100 KV transformer for lifting water and the contractor was having problems getting this from PWD. The LSO lobbied with Public Work Department (PWD) and arranged for the transformer in time. Due to the active policy advocacy and lobbying of the LSO, the project was completed well on time.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Disputes and conflicts among families, groups and clans are extremely hazardous for social mobilisation. Moreover, they have serious economic, social and cultural costs not only to the rival groups but to the entire community. The LSO, therefore, takes all possible measures to resolve disputes and conflicts through reconciliation and arbitration.

When the government introduced the idea of Musalahati (Reconciliation) Jirga at UC level, the LSO actively contributed in it and accomplished the resolution of 350 cases through reconciliation and arbitration. Due to its extraordinary performance, the Committee has received "The Best Musalahati Jirga Award" of the district. The LSO has even been able to resolve murder cases through the Musalahati Jirga.

Similarly the government introduced Thana level Musalahati Committee some two years ago. However, the committee existed only on paper. Last year, the LSO offered its services to the Thana authorities. The LSO nominated two members into it. Though the Committee has seven members, but the most effective and influential members are the ones nominated by the LSO. The chairmanship of the committee is with the LSO representative. The Police authorities first refer all cases to the Musalahati Committee for reconciliation and register FIRs of only those cases which do not cooperate with the Musalahati Committee. The Committee resolves 99% cases through reconciliation and arbitration measures. Within one year of its operation, the Committee has managed to resolve 70 disputes. Interestingly, a number of cases that are registered with the Police also come back to the Committee at later stages.

