

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 Koh Land

District:	Kotli
Union Council:	Khad Gojran
Date of formation:	24-07-2010
Total Households in Union Council:	1,522
Organised Households:	1,013
Coverage:	67%
No of Community Organisations (COs):	54 (10 women's)
Number of Village Organisations (VOs):	6 (all mix)
No of General Body Members:	30 (10 women)
No of Executive Committee Members:	15 (5 women)

Provision of course books to deserving students

The students of both government and private schools have to buy their course books in AJK. Poor families who do not afford cost of the books either do not send their children to schools or the students go to school without books. The LSO identifies such children and arranges books for them. For this purpose, the LSO motivated their people working in the Middle Eastern countries to form a Education Development Society and make regular donations to it. The LSO certifies the list of the deserving students from the School Management Committees of the concerned schools, buy books and send the bill to the Education Development Society abroad, that pay the bill to the

shop keeper directly. This arrangement makes the entire process transparent. In addition to supplying free books, the LSO motivates the private schools to exempt these students from paying fee. From 2011 to 2015, the LSO had supported 540 deserving students.

Establishment of Examination Centre

There was no Examination Centre in the UC. Therefore, around 300 students appearing in 9th and 10th grade examinations had to go to government Examination Centre located at a distance of 25 kilometres in the neighbouring UC to give their exams. Due to lack of public transport facilities, the students needed to pay around Rs. 3,000 per head to the private transporters. As a result of that, the parents of the students had to bear around Rs. one million on transportation cost annually and the students had to waste 3 to 4 hours on travelling on daily basis.



To resolve the issue, the LSO decided to set up an official Examination Centre in their own UC. They needed a hall and permission from AJK Board to set up the Centre. The LSO collected Rs. 400,000 from local well off families and constructed a hall in the premises of the local High School and obtained approval for the Examination Centre from the AJK Board in 2011.

Construction of Foot Bridge

A stream divides three villages of the UC. Therefore, 345 households who live in these villages had problems in crossing the stream. Moreover, students of both the girls' and boys' high schools had the same problem. The stream used to become quite dangerous during the rainy seasons due to flood water.

In the year 2011, the LSO resolved to construct a 52 feet long and 4 feet wide RCC foot bridge on self help basis to facilitate the people of the affected villages. For this purpose, they contacted 50 better off families and collected Rs. 5,000 from each one of them. They collected hides of sacrificial animals on the eve of Eid ul Azha and raised Rs. 10,000 by selling them. They also raised Rs 90,000 from various other sources. Thus they constructed the RCC foot bridge with a total cost of Rs. 350,000 that was raised entirely from local sources.

Training of government school teachers

With the technical and financial support of World Learning, a USAID funded NGO, the LSO arranged training for 24 primary and 14 middle and high school teachers. The training project not only improved the teaching and school management skills of the local teachers but also provided the LSO leaders a golden opportunity for developing mutual understanding and healthy relationship with the teaching staff of the local schools.

Trial Plots of seeds

Farming is still the main occupation of the local people and maize is the major crop. But due to use of traditional seeds, the yield is very low. The LSO has been establishing trial plots of maize seed in the area where the improved variety maize seeds are tested for their germination and yield. Due to the demonstration effect of these trial plots, more and more local farmers are adopting improved maize seeds. As a result the farming income of the local farmers has increased significantly.

