



LSO Initiatives LSO CHIRAH, ICT



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An update on the work of Local Support Organisations



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, donor agencies and the private sector.

Micro Credit to members

The LSO has been actively working with the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) to provide financial assistance to its members for initiating new and expanding running income generating activities. The LSO members assist NRSP staff in appraisal of loan cases and timely recovery of loan amount. Due to the active support of LSO leaders, the micro loans programme is operating successfully with particular focus on women. So far, 6,427 members have taken micro loans of Rs. 11.6 million. Out of the total, 58% loans have been availed by women. 74%, have been utilised for livestock rearing, followed by 24% loans for enterprise development and the remaining for agriculture. This programme has led to financial inclusion which ultimately leads to increase in income, and assets of the beneficiary members. In addition, this also contributed to increase in education and health outcomes among the community members. Most of the beneficiary women report increased confidence and enhanced social status in family and community circles.

Date of Formation:
05 July, 2013

District:
ICT

Union Council:
Chirah

Total Households in Union Council:
4,490

Organised Households:
4,225

Coverage:
94%

No of Community Organisations (COs):
188
125 women's

No of Village Organisations (VOs):
7
all mix

No of General Body Members:
26
19 women's

No of Executive Committee Members:
8
4 women's

Community Investment Fund

Community Investment Fund (CIF), a grant to LSOs, is to be used for interest free credit to the poorest women who usually cannot access other sources of credit. NRSP provides CIF grant to those LSOs who meet certain criteria, such as proper record keeping, audit and women-inclusive programmes. Once provided, CIF is owned and managed by community having met the set criteria. LSO Chirah qualified for CIF grant in the year 2013. So far, 5 VOs of the LSO have received Rs. 1.328 million. By virtue of the multiplier effect of the CIF grant, 494 women members have received Rs. 7.057,000 million. The recovery ratio is 100%. CIF has contributed to improving leadership and management skills of LSO leaders and increase in income and assets of borrowers.



Promotion of Education

Before organising communities into COs, VOs and later in LSOs, the literacy ratio was very low in this UC. In 2003, the literacy ratio was only 7%. The reasons for the low literacy included lack of education facilities and lack of awareness among parents about the importance of education of their children, especially daughters. In the poorest families, children were often involved in child labour. Once formed, the LSO focussed on the establishment of educational institution across the UC. As a result of their continuous advocacy, they were able to establish 19 schools, including 6 for girls. The LSO also established two colleges, one for boys and one for girls in their UC with government funds. In addition to this, they established 5 schools with the help of NRSP and 3 girls schools with the financial support of Development in Literacy (DIL), a non-governmental organisation. The LSO Chirah arranged 22 scholarships per month for bright, needy students with the financial support of Al Khidmat Foundation. On the other hand, the LSO carried out awareness raising campaigns about education among their members from the platforms of their COs and VOs. The enrolment ratio has now reached to 100%. There is no child labour in the UC. The literacy ratio has grown to 82% for men and 78% for women.

Human Resource Development

As the saying goes, "poor people are poor in people", a key reason for under development of the people is because they lack skills to make use of their available resources. Understanding this fact, the LSO has been consistently endeavoring to provide managerial and vocational skills to its members. So far, the LSO has arranged Community Management Skill Training (CMST) for its 175 members and Leadership Management Skills Training (LMST) to 5 members with the technical and financial assistance of NRSP. Likewise, the LSO has enhanced capacities of its 2,810 members in various vocational skills, including tailoring, embroidery, knitting and sewing, tie and dye, shampoo making, beautician, vegetable cultivation, fruit and vegetable preservation, forest nursery raising and poultry management. The managerial training sessions have contributed to organisational development at CO, VO and LSO levels. The vocational skills training sessions have contributed to increase in their household level income and assets. Besides, these capacity building activities have boosted the self confidence and empowerment of members.