



LSO Initiatives

# Society Development Foundation

## What are LSOs?

LSOs are union council-level organisations consisting of grassroots communities and are central to the RSPs' approach of Social Mobilisation. Social Mobilisation entails the organising of rural communities (with a special focus on women and the poorest) into their own organisations through a three-tiered structure. LSOs consist of Community Organisations (COs) (neighbourhood-level community groups) and Village Organisations (federations of COs at the village level). These two tiers federate to form the LSO at the third tier in order to carry out community-led development of the union council. LSOs are able to carry out development through self-help initiatives, linkages with NGOs, donors and the private sector as well as work with and hold local government accountable due to their advantage of numbers.

## The LSO

District: Bagh, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK)

Union Council: Rawali

Total Households in union council: 3,577

Organised Households: 2,666

Coverage: 75%

Number of Village Organisations (VOs): 16  
mixed VOs

Number of Community Organisations (COs): 151  
(70 men's COs, 69 women's COs and 12 mix  
COs)

Number of General Body Members: 125 (71  
men and 54 women)

Number of Executive Body Members: 24 (14  
men and 10 women)

## The Initiatives

### STIPENDS FOR THE POOREST

The LSO carried out a survey in its union council to find out how many widows and women-headed households there were. As a result, 50 were identified as the poorest and facilitated to obtain Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) stipends. Before the BISP programme was changed (to identifying beneficiaries through the Poverty Scorecard), beneficiaries

would be identified through a quota system given to Ministers. These government representatives would identify beneficiaries in their constituencies. At that time, the LSO tapped into their political connections in order to ensure that stipends were provided to those women which had been identified in their survey.

### TRAINING FOR OTHER LSOs

The LSO was provided the task of giving various training sessions to surrounding LSOs, in LSO management, record-keeping and developing village development plans. The LSO also was assigned the task of carrying out the Poverty Scorecard survey in two neighbouring union councils by the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) in order to ascertain the level of poverty in those areas.

### RECYCLING WASTE

The LSO has taken a lead in ensuring that its pristine environment is maintained. To this end, besides carrying out extensive forest plantations, the LSO has also started recycling waste. It has provided awareness-raising sessions to its member Community



**Asma, 24 - an avid recycler of bottles into decoration-items and paper into envelopes**

Organisations about the benefits of recycling. As a result, several of the households in the union council recycle different waste material e.g. medicinal bottles. Having used the medicines, households clean the bottle and return it to the pharmaceutical stores. In return they are provided with Rs. 2-5 per bottle. The same is also true for other glass bottles, which are sold to various shops. In addition to this, the LSO has provided its members with training on how to make shopping bags out of cloth; in order to discourage the use of plastic bags. Along with being environmentally friendly, these cloth bags are preferred by shoppers in the union council because they are stronger than plastic bags and last longer over the period of long walks to and fro from the bazaar. Several women members in the LSO now make these bags and sell them on a regular basis in the bazaar; ranging from Rs. 20-50 which then adds to their household income.

#### OLD BOOK CENTRE

The LSO realised that poor children in the union council were not able to pursue their studies because of their inability to afford school books.

In order to combat this, the LSO now actively collects school books from students that no longer require them at the end of each academic year. The books are then provided to less advantaged children who will be entering those grades in the coming academic year. So far a total of 225 children have been provided with *entire* book sets for their classes for one academic year.



**A meeting in front of the LSO office**

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