

## **Rural Communities in the Fight against COVID-19: A Case Rural Women Activists in Collaboration of District Administration, District Departments and**

### **Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO)**

Corona virus disease created a very panic in all over the world including beloved country. Almost all world countries affected such pandemic. In Pakistan corona virus affected a large number of community and many people reported were death and in Isolation centers. Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) with collaboration of district administration and health department of the district signed a MOU. The aim of the MOU to identification of community activist, training of community activists and LSO, CRP representatives and awareness activities at community level and identification of suspected areas under the Trace, Test and Quarantine strategy. For spreading the awareness, Sindh Rural support organization (SRSO) have a strong community network in the district Mirpurkhas, which operates in five **55** union councils, having built up a strong network of 46 community-based Local Support Organizations (LSOs) in district Mirpurkhas. At grass root level, SRSO has a strong network of community institutions in the forms below described structure. The LSO is a federated structure at union council level, with village and community organizations. In district Mirpurkhas's **55** Union councils, while **46** LSO level community institutions in **46** Union councils, **6,064** community organizations (COs), **767** Village Organizations (VOs) and **95323** organized households in targeted area and union councils of the district Mirpurkhas.

At grass root level SRSO has linked these community institutions and their activists and signing the MoU with district administration primarily to build the linkages community with government institutions to protect the community from pandemic along with spread awareness about COVID-19 including community awareness session on hand wash, social distancing who to protect and spreading knowledge about the relevant precautionary measures to adopt in order to prevent its rapid spread.

### **Training Event:**

Sindh Rural Support Organization organized a very successful training event for LSO representative, CRPs and community activist after the successful signing of MoU. Such awareness training organized by Sindh Rural Support Organization at SRSO District Office hall where Drsajan from Government health department and Mr: Naeem Ahmed Malah from COVID-19 emergency control room representative participated as trainer to deliver the sessions on COVID-19. The participants were 12 from 06 community institutions' office bearers of LSOs, community activist person and 04 from SRSO staff who were trained to be enhanced the capacity as leader of curbing the spread of COVID-19 and spread awareness at community level.



### **List of LSOs participated in training event awareness on COVID-19.**

1. LSO Shah Latif union council Balouchabad (2 Participants)
2. LSO Jhurbi union council Jhurbi (2 Participants)
3. LSO Sooraj union council Mir Muhammad Achan (02 Participants)
4. LSO Chand union council Kaak (02 Participants)
5. LSO Surhan Union Council Doaltpur (02 Participants)
6. LSO Khushal Union council Old Mirpur (02 Participants)

### Training activity:

Ms. Marvi Mumtaz is a Community Resource Person from Local Support Organization Jhurbi, UC Jhurbi



in district Mirpurkhas. She received trainings on community management and Leadership, community awareness, and COVID-19 from the Sindh Rural Support Organization the Peoples Poverty Reduction Program.



Such training facilitated by district Government Health department on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 at community training hall district Office Mirpurkhas.

### Case study [Ms. Marvi Mamtaz, LSO Jhurbi, Mirpurkhas]

Ms. Marvi Mamtaz is a Community Resource Person (CRP) LSO Jhurbi at UC Jhurbi, Taluka Sindhri District Mirpurkhas. She received successful trainings on community awareness and tracing of suspected cases, community awareness about COVID-19 from the Government officials of District Health department and relevant emergency officials.



After getting training Ms. Marvi Mamtaz has been very active in the field by giving awareness sessions on health, hygiene, hand washing hands with soap, social distancing and other preventive measures against COVID-19 in her community. As of now, she has delivered twenty two awareness sessions on social distancing, hand wash and awareness on COVID-19 and distributed 66 soaps among 40 poorest households in her community.

She said ***“We have learnt many new things from this training. There were so many things that we hadn’t thought of before. The knowledge from this training has now equipped us with the capacity to combat this COVID-19 properly. We have given extensive information to our community by explaining to them the importance of wearing masks, using sanitizers, washing hands, disinfecting houses and keeping social distance”***





Ms. Marvi Mamtaz plays a very important role during COVID-19 situation because she is active in awareness activities at grass root level and always keeps in touch with



communities regarding awareness, education, health and many more. In addition, during this pandemic situation she is more active and has a keen interest to spread the awareness and keep safe rural communities at village and Union Council level. At community level to protect the villagers she utilizes the platform of LSO Jhurbi because she is Chairperson of the LSO Jhurbi. She plays a very positive role during door-to-door campaigns and delivers sessions on 12 households per day against COVID-19. She has conducted 22 public awareness sessions on social distancing. Moreover, during COVID-19 situation 20 sessions were conducted on hygiene and hand-washing demonstrations with communities. While she also plays an important role for the distribution of IEC material like brochures, pamphlets provided by SRSO.

During a delivery session at the community level Ms. Marvi Mumtaz said: ***I am always keeping social distance during delivering the sessions at the community level, same practices keeping in hand wash activities at community level along with covering face with mask to be saved from others and community obliging my request and keeping social distance during discussion with each other***

In addition, she plays a very active role and coordinates and communicates with community groups for keeping social distancing, daily using hand wash practices. Due to her active role and using the platform of LSO she engages female community activists and also male community members for awareness and avoiding social gatherings at village, union council level.

**Feedback on Community Response:** CRPs and LSO members belong to the local area of said Union Council and the community is well known about all of them. So the community welcomed them and responded to them positively. The community started following the SOPs guided by LSO and CRPs. The community is taking a keen interest to attend sessions and campaigns.

### **Challenges:**

CRPs and LSOs are providing their services free of cost, but often they have to move to other villages and they have no transport source. They need sanitizers while moving in the field because otherwise they themselves may be a source of spreading the virus. But they cannot afford sanitizers.