



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 under BRACE, mobilise rural women and men 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.

LSO INITIATIVES

Local Support Organisation Iqra

 District Killa Abdullah	 Union Council Inayatullah Karaiz	 Date of Formation 7-3-2019	 Total Households in Union Council 2,051	 Organised Households 1,381	 Coverage 63%
 Number of COs 117 76 WOMEN'S		 Number of VOs 24 05 WOMEN'S		 # of General Body Members 81	 # of Executive Committee Members 11

LSO Iqra, from Killa Abdullah, was formed on March 7th, 2019 by 1,381 member households organised into 117 COs and 24 VOs. The leaders of LSO Iqra are planning and implementing development activities both on a self-help basis as well as in collaboration with government agencies. The EU-funded BRACE Programme is empowering rural men and women in Balochistan through realising the power they gain from collective action. Organised men and women are now gaining awareness about their rights, making the service providers accountable, and also taking initiatives to improve their lives.

Combating COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health crisis; it is one of the most serious socio-economic crisis the humanity faced in its known history. The poor families, women, and other marginalized groups whose lives, livelihoods, nutrition, and access to basic services are least secure suffer the most from the pandemic. When the pandemic hit Pakistan, the Federal Government, in collaboration with the Provincial Governments launched a comprehensive combat strategy. An important element of the strategy was to involve the organised communities in the rural areas of Pakistan for awareness raising, Trace, Test and Quarantine the suspicious persons, identification of vulnerable individuals and families and distribution of Government's food and financial support among the deserving families. The Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) signed MoUs with district administration and linked LSO leaders with them. LSO Iqra also joined this programme. The Health Department trained the community activists (women and men) of the LSO on COVID-19 related preventive measures and Trace, Test & Quarantine (TTQ)

activities. LSO Iqra carried out the following activities in collaboration with its member VOs and COs:

1. The LSO leaders trained the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) in delivering awareness raising sessions and hand washing practices. The CRPs in turn delivered awareness sessions on COVID-19 in the CO meetings along with the Community Awareness Toolkit sessions. So far, the CRPs have delivered 83 sessions in COs.
2. The LSO and VO leaders made announcement from twelve local mosques and raised the awareness of the general masses about preventive measures against COVID-19.
3. The LSO activists traced six suspected cases and referred them to Tehsil Health Office for COVID-19 test. The result of only one person was positive and the remaining five cases were negative. The person with positive result was immediately taken to Quetta for treatment. Due to the timely treatment, the sick person recovered from the disease quickly and is now living a healthy life.

4. The Tehsil Health Office provided the LSO activists with 180 sanitisers and 700 face masks, which they distributed among poor families.
5. When the Federal Government announced EHSAAAS Cash Grant Programme, the poor people were facing difficulties in getting

themselves registered with the programme. The LSO activist helped register 170 eligible families. All these families received PKR 12,000 each from the EHSAAAS Cash Grant Programme. The cumulative funds they received amounted to PKR 2,040,000.



A CRP delivering awareness session on COVID-19 in a CO meeting

Provision of Livestock Feed from FAO

The main source of family livelihood of the poor members of the LSO is livestock. The milk, meat, wool and hides of these animals play a key role in the fulfilling the nutritional needs of the family members as well as in earning some cash income by selling the surplus produce in the local market. They graze their animals in the natural pastures around their villages. However, continuous draught has been reducing the quality of the pastures, and both the quantity and quality of forage has drastically declined. There is no single dam for rain water storage in the UC, therefore, the labour and cost of provision of drinking water to the animals had also



LSO Meeting to identify eligible members and finalise a distribution plan



Distribution of animals feed bags among deserving members

significantly increased. Shortage of fodder and water due to the current drought has caused heavy losses of livestock and affected the livelihood of these pastoral communities adversely. These negative effects of draught were felt more severely by the poorest families, orphans and widow headed families.

A number of LSO leaders had worked with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in the past. FAO is a United Nations agency that works internationally to defeat hunger by developing agriculture. These LSO leaders visited FAO office in Quetta and explained the plight of their members due to the consistent draught over the last several years.

FAO officials listened to them patiently and agreed to provide feed for their animals. Subsequently, FAO delivered 2,000 bags of animal feed to the LSO leaders at their UC. The LSO called a union council level general meeting, in which they prepared a list of poor and most deserving members and finalised a distribution plan. They then arranged a distribution ceremony at the LSO office and

the listed members were invited to collect their share of feed bags. The feed bags were distributed in the presence of the FAO team. The beneficiary members and the LSO leaders appreciated FAO support and requested the organisation's continued support in future, as the draught situation is worsening with time.

Provision of Food Items to COVID-19 Effected Families from Jan Japan Company

Jan Japan Motors Company Quetta supports poor people through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) window. The LSO leaders had implemented a project in the past with the financial support of this company and so they knew about the organisation and its owner. When the poor families were severely affected during the lockdown period imposed by the Government to prevent the spread of the disease, the LSO executive body members arranged a meeting with Jan Japan Company in their office in Quetta city and briefed them on how the lockdown has adversely affected the availability of food items for poor families in their UC. Jan Japan Company offered to provide packages of basic food items to the deserving families if the LSO leaders share a list of such families with them. The LSO leaders prepared the list of deserving families with the help of their member VOs and COs and submitted this list to the company. Jan Japan Company provided 500 food packages to the LSO at their UC office. The LSO organised a distribution ceremony and handed over the food packages to the listed families in the presence of the representatives of Jan Japan Company. The food package had enough material to support an average family over six months. Therefore, it helped these poor families meet their



Distribution of food packages received from Jan Japan Company among poor families

nutritional needs in a critical time. The LSO leaders presented a Pashtoon cultural turban to the guest and thanked the Jan Japan Company for their timely support. The beneficiary members also applauded the generous support of the Company and said that the food package would relieve their sufferings and would improve the nutrition status of their families. The representative of Jan Japan Company appreciated the transparent distribution of the food packages and promised that they would provide more support to LSO Iqra in the future.



The representative of Jan Japan CO. with LSO Executive Body members at the food distribution ceremony

Coordination with Government Health Department to Improve the BHU and Vaccination Campaigns

Under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) deliver awareness sessions on cross-cutting development themes. It was during these awareness sessions, that the LSO leaders learnt about their roles in collaborating with Government line departments to resolve social sector issues. In this regard, the Executive Body members of the LSO visited the Basic Health Unit (BHU) Inayatullah Karaiz which serves 1,390 households of the UC. They held a meeting with the staff of the BHU and tried to understand what issues they were facing, what were the missing facilities in the BHU and how the LSO leaders could play their roles in resolving them. The BHU staff appreciated the initiative of the LSO leaders and briefed them on the issues and missing facilities at the BHU. They identified lack of supply of sufficient medicines from the Health Department, lack of a lady doctor and lack of a gynaecology ward in the BHU as the main challenges faced by the BHU. The LSO leaders noted these points and promised the BHU staff to take up these issues with the relevant higher authorities in the Health Department. The LSO leaders also advised the BHU staff to perform their duties regularly and effectively, which they now do.

They then visited the People's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) officials and briefed them on the identified requirements to improve the functioning of the BHU. The PPHI officials appreciated the initiative of the LSO leaders and promised to increase the quota of medicines, hire a lady doctor and construct a gynaecology ward at the BHU. PPHI has already increased the quota of medicines and appointed a lady doctor to the BHU. The efficiency and effectiveness of the BHU's health services have now increased significantly.

In addition, the LSO leaders met with the District Health Officer (DHO) and offered their support in the vaccination campaigns. The DHO appreciated their support and promised his full support for improving health status of the people in the UC. On the instructions of the District Health Officer, the vaccination teams now coordinate with the LSO leaders. The vaccination team informs LSO leaders about the date and villages of their visit and the LSO and the relevant VO leaders inform the community about the vaccination campaign. They also educate the refusing families and motivate them to deliver vaccines to their children and pregnant women. Due to these collaborative efforts, the coverage of vaccination has increased across the UC.



The Govt. Vaccination Team delivering vaccines in the community



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