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.

**Local Support Organisation Viala Duki**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Union Council</th>
<th>Date of Formation</th>
<th>Total Households in Union Council</th>
<th>Organised Households</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duki</td>
<td>Viala</td>
<td>20-07-2016</td>
<td>1,653</td>
<td>1,135</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LSO Viala Duki, from District Duki, was formed on 20th July, 2016 by 1,135 member households organised into 110 men and women COs and 46 men and women VOs. The leaders of LSO Viala Duki 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.

### Preparation of National Identity Card

The Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) is an important document because it not only provides a legal citizenship right to its holder but is also required for all kinds of formal transactions in the country. When the LSO was formed in UC Viala under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) conducted awareness sessions for the member COs on cross cutting development themes including a session on civil registration. These sessions raised the awareness of the people of the area and they were motivated to prepare CNICs of all eligible men and women. Since the NADRA office is located only at the district Head Quarter, the women, elderly locals and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) were facing difficulties in accessing the office. Not only was it time consuming but was also expensive as each person has to spend around PKR 2,500 on travel, food and other expenses. Realising these issues facing the common people of their UC, the LSO leaders contacted the NADRA officials and requested them to send a NADRA mobile van to the villages of UC Viala. The LSO leaders prepared village wise lists of men and women who needed new CNICs and submitted the list to NADRA office with the help of the VO leaders. NADRA office obliged and sent their mobile van to these villages and prepared CNICs of eligible people at their doorstep in their villages. On the advice of the LSO leaders, the concerned VO leaders coordinated with the NADRA staff and informed the people about the date and place of the NADRA mobile van’s visit and guided them by collecting missing documents well in advance. This collaborative effort of the LSO leaders with NADRA and VO leaders helped prepare 620 CNICs of men, women and PWDs at their doorsteps free of cost. This not only saved their time and effort but also saved a huge amount of money.
**Voter Registration**

A transparent, accurate and inclusive voter registration process allows eligible voters to exercise their fundamental civil right to vote, while acting as a safeguard against attempts to manipulate the process. To achieve this, the Election Commission of Pakistan had set up Display Centres in rural areas to facilitate the eligible men and women to register themselves as voters and make corrections in their names according to their CNIC. Previously, people used to show little interest in cooperating with the Election Commission staff. However, after the formation of the LSO under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the members and leaders of the LSO Viala Duki learned about the importance of casting votes via community awareness raising sessions conducted by CRPs in CO meetings. Therefore, when the Election Commission staff established Display Centres for voter registration in the LSO area, the LSO leaders launched a campaign to motivate all eligible men and women to visit the Election Commission Desk. As a result of this campaign, around 620 men and women visited Election Commission Desks and registered themselves as voters.

**Activities against COVID-19 pandemic**

RSPN and its member Rural Support Programmes, agreed upon a partnership to combat the COVID-19 disease and the challenges brought on by the pandemic, in collaboration with the organised communities across 1,500 rural union councils from 66 districts all over Pakistan. The collaboration between community institutions and the government started in May 2020, with provincial governments taking the lead. BRSP also joined the partnership and built cooperative mechanisms between the LSOs and the government authorities. The leaders and Community Resource Persons (CRPs) of LSO Viala Duki played their part effectively in this regard. The key activities conducted by the LSO are as under.

1. The community leaders received training from Government Health Department on awareness raising for COVID-19 virus and Trace, Test and Quarantine (TTQ) activities

2. The Community Resource Persons (CRPs) delivered awareness sessions on COVID-19 during their routine community awareness toolkit (CAT) sessions with Community Organisations (COs). During the sessions, the community members were educated about the signs and symptoms of coronavirus disease, precautionary measures to be taken to keep themselves safe from the viral infection and TTQ measures in case of infected persons in their families and neighbourhood.

3. The LSO leaders carried out awareness raising campaigns across the UC through loudspeaker announcements. They educated people on avoiding crowded places, keeping distance, wearing face masks and following all the SOPs recommended by the Government.

4. They also distributed ration among the 50 poorest household received from the Deputy Commissioner.

5. The community activists stitched 450 cloth face masks and distributed them among poor community members, free of cost.

As a result of these collaborative efforts, the LSO members practiced the preventive measures and remained relatively safe in the pandemic.
Approval of Ambulance from Governor of Balochistan for the Union Council

Due to extremely scattered population distribution in UC Viala, accessibility to roads remains a key issue for accessing socio-economic facilities in cities and towns, especially the health facilities. The health facilities in the UC are poorly equipped in terms of staff, laboratory equipment and medicines. Therefore, people have to take their patients to the hospitals located in Quetta city. Transporting critically ill men and women patients, and women facing labour complications requires a properly equipped ambulance. Therefore, the LSO leaders, with the help of local notable, Sardar Masoom Tareen, submitted an application to the office of the Governor of Balochistan for providing the LSO with a well-equipped ambulance. They also requested the Governor to improve the supply of medicines to the Basic Health Unit (BHU) and Government Dispensaries. The Governor of Balochistan approved their request and provided them with the ambulance, equipped with basic equipment. The LSO leaders assured the Governor that they will maintain the ambulance and provide fuel for its mobility from their savings. So far, 70 households have utilized the ambulance for shifting their patients to better equipped health centres in district Head Quarter as well as in Quetta city.

Provision of 50 Plastic Water Tanks to Community Members from Local Government

Another issue that the LSO leaders identified was availability of clean water for drinking, both for people and their domestic animals. A large number of poor people store rain water in ponds and use it for drinking purposes. Animals drink water from the same ponds leaving the water unfit for human consumption. Therefore, water-borne diseases are common amongst local people and their animals.

Provision of Solar Panels to Poor Members, from the MPA

The leaders of LSO Viala Duki are working hard for the development and prosperity of its members. One key development issue that came into their notice was the fact that the people of the area do not have proper supply of electricity. Frequent electricity load shedding of long hours, sometimes lasting several days, means stable electricity is almost non-existent in the UC. While, well off families have installed solar panels in their houses for an uninterrupted electricity supply, poor families cannot afford this facility.

The LSO leaders discussed this issue in their meeting and discussed various options to resolve it. One solution they all agreed upon was to lobby for solar panels for the poor families before Member Provincial Assembly (MPA), requesting him to provide funds from his discretionary development reserves. The LSO leaders met with him and briefed him on the difficulties faced by the poor families on day to day basis due to lack of electricity and requested him to provide solar panels for them. The MPA promised to provided eight solar panels to the LSO leaders. The total cost of the solar panels is around PKR 1 million. The LSO leaders identified poorest families, received the solar panels and distributed them among them. The poor families are now enjoying an uninterrupted electricity supply; they are now able to charge their mobile phone batteries and their children can study at night. These community members are happy and enjoying the electricity facility.
After getting organised into COs, VOs and LSO under the EU funded BRACE Programme, they learnt how to resolve their development issues by establishing good working relationships with the Local Government Authorities. They went to meet the Local Government authorities, briefed them on the negative effects of consuming contaminated water and asked them to solve their problem. The Local Government provided 50 plastic water tanks to the LSO leaders for storage of rain water in a clean and hygienic manner. The LSO leaders distributed these plastic water tanks among fifty needy and poorest families. Now these families are enjoying clean water for drinking purposes. The total cost of the plastic water tanks is PKR 1.2 million.

Installation of Solar Street Lights in UC with Political and Financial Support of MPA

When the LSO was formed, there were no street lights in the UC area. Therefore, the local markets were closed right after sunset. Moreover, moving around the UC area at night was dangerous, therefore, people used to wait till morning next day to move around. In times of health related emergencies like child birth, the people of the UC used to face extreme challenges. Therefore, the leaders of LSO Viala conducted a survey of the market areas and other places with the goal of installing street lights across the UC and estimated that if they can arrange 70 poles with solar panels and lights, they can illuminate the entire market areas and the main streets of their UC. They discussed the plan with their MPA and requested his support in this regard. The MPA provided 70 electric poles, equipped with solar panels and lights from the union council’s development budget. The LSO leaders installed the solar electric poles across the UC. The solar street lights are facilitating the local residents in conducting their economic activities even after the sunset. Moreover, the local people can now easily move around during the night. The total cost of solar street light is around PKR 1.5 million.

Cleaning of Streets in Union Council in Collaboration with the Local Government

Another issue that came into the notice of the LSO leader was the garbage piles of solid waste at different sites in the streets and on road sides across the UC. The garbage piles were causing air pollution and spreading various diseases. Moreover, after a shower of rain, the garbage areas used to become ponds of dirt and slush, and people faced serious problems walking and driving in those areas. The LSO called a special meeting of its Executive Body members to discuss the issue and find a sustainable solution for it. The members resolved to clean the UC areas of the stocked piles of garbage. However, this required a tractor with a properly equipped trolley and a loader machine, which were available only with the Local Government department. Therefore, they decided to put in an application to the Local Government asking for the tractor trolley and loader to clear the UC of the garbage piles. The LSO leaders held a meeting with the Local Government Authorities, briefed them on the issue and the UC cleaning plan, and submitted a formal application asking for their support in the form of provision of the tractor trolley and the loader machine free of cost. The Local Government authorities reviewed their issues and challenges and approved the services of the tractor trolley and loader for the garbage removal in the UC, free of cost. The LSO leaders started a cleanliness campaign in the UC, removed the garbage from the UC area and shifted it to far off locations around the villages and settlements. Over 400 households benefited from the cleanliness activities. Now the residents find their environment to be clean and source of wellbeing.

Implementation of Three Street Pavement Projects in the Union Council from MPA’s Discretionary Funds

Union council Viala is a developmentally disadvantaged area of district Duki. Before the formation of the LSO, not a single street of the UC area was paved. During the rainy days, the shingle roads and streets of the UC used to turn into mud ponds, and walking and driving around them used to become a nuisance for the people even in the daylight. When the LSO was formed under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the LSO leaders held a meeting and discussed the matter amongst themselves. They rightly
concluded that unless the streets are paved, they would never be able to resolve the issue in a sustainable manner. But the estimated cost of road and street pavement was so high that it was beyond the communities’ financial capacity. They, therefore, decided to put up their issue with their MPA and ask for his support for providing funds from the Government resources. The MPA approved PKR 5 million for the pavement project in three streets in two villages of Thamseer and Porana Duki. These two villages consist around 150 households. After the approval of funds by the MPA, the LSO leaders, in collaboration with the relevant VO/CO members, started the work on a self-help basis. They carried out the labour work free of cost and spent the allocated funds on purchasing the required material. They completed the work well before the estimated time and with the end product being of the finest quality, because all people involved in the project from the villages worked sincerely and passionately. The street pavement projects have improved the quality of life of the villagers in multiple ways: the locals now enjoy a clean and dust-free environment as vehicles don’t generate dust as they used to when running over unpaved streets, the residents feel comfortable while walking and driving on the paved streets, there has been a reduction in the cost of transport to and from the villages, and most importantly the residents feel their relatively clean villages are pleasant to look at and live in.

Pavement of Four Kilometre Road of the Union Council with MPA Fund

Another big achievement of LSO leaders is pavement of a four kilometres long road across their union council. As discussed earlier, not a single road and street of the UC was paved in the UC before the LSO formation. To remedy this, the LSO leaders held a meeting with their MPA and brought the issues caused by shingle roads to his notice. The MPA very kindly approved PKR 35 million for pavement of a four kilometre road. The road pavement project has been completed, and now the people of UC are enjoying easy access to market areas and health facilities.