



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 Ittehad, Killa Abdullah

 District Killa Abdullah	 Union Council Abdul Rehmanzai 2	 Date of Formation 03-05-2019	 Total Households in Union Council 2,051	 Organised Households 1,617	 Coverage 59%		
 Number of COs 129 59 WOMEN'S		 Number of VOs 14 05 WOMEN'S		 # of General Body Members 46 00 WOMEN'S		 # of Executive Committee Members 11 00 WOMEN'S	

LSO Ittehad, from Killa Abdullah, was formed on May 3, 2019 by 1,617 member households organised into 129 COs and 14 VOs. The leaders of LSO Ittehad are planning and implementing development activities both on a self-help basis as well as in collaboration with government agencies and other development partners in donor 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.

Activities to Fight against COVID-19 Pandemic

The leaders of LSO Ittehad and its member VOs performed a very active role in fighting against the spread of COVID-19 disease in their union council. The LSO leaders took self-help initiatives at the initial stage and provided food items to vulnerable families affected adversely during the nation-wide lockdown imposed by the Government. Later on, when BRSP signed an MoU with the District Government Authorities to launch a collaborative effort to control the spread of the pandemic in close coordination with local organised communities, the leaders of LSO Ittehad and its member VOs extended all possible support at their disposal to BRSP and Government Authorities. BRSP with the technical support of Government Health Department organised a training session for the LSO leaders and the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) on awareness raising about the threat of the pandemic and to educate the masses on taking preventive measures to safeguard themselves, their family members and neighbours from getting infected by the virus and Trace, Test and Quarantine (TTQ) the suspected cases. The LSO leaders conducted the following activities:

1. Made the Government SOPs on COVID-19 part of the Community Awareness Toolkits (CATs) developed under the EU funded BRACE Programme and asked the CRPs to deliver awareness sessions on COVID-19 in the CO meetings as part of their routine sessions. So far, the CRPs have delivered 76 sessions in as many COs. The awareness sessions are still continued and will continue till the threat of the pandemic is over.
2. The LSO leaders demonstrated hand washing technique with soap for its members and asked them to teach the technique to their family members.
3. Both the LSO and VO leaders frequently made announcements from local mosques on following COVID-19 SOPs. This significantly raised the awareness of the general masses and they observed the SOPs.
4. They traced six suspected cases and referred them to Tehsil Health Office for COVID-19 test. Only one case was proven positive and the others were proven negative. The positive case was provided proper care and medication while being

kept in isolation, therefore, he recovered completely in time.

5. The Tehsil Health Office distributed sanitisers and face masks among poor people. The LSO leaders approached them and received 200 sanitisers and 900 face masks from the Tehsil Health Office and distributed them among poor members of their LSO.
6. When the Federal Government launched EHSAAAS Cash Grant Programme, poor, eligible people were facing difficulties in getting themselves registered with the programme. The LSO leaders identified such families and helped them get registered online. As a result of this timely support, 150 eligible families received PKR 1.8 million from EHSAAAS Cash Grant Program.



LSO leaders demonstrating hand washing practice to community members

Arrangement of Livestock Feed Supplement for Poor Families from NDMA with Financial Support of FAO

Due to the persistent, long spell of drought in Balochistan plateau, the livestock owner of UC Abdul Rehmanzai 2 were facing multiple challenges. Due to minimal precipitation ratio, the quality of local pastures has degraded badly. Therefore, the livestock owners needed to provide feed supplement to their domestic animals. Most of these herders belong to poor families, and they could not afford to buy feed supplement for their animals, therefore, they were forced to sell their animals to minimise their herd size. As a result, both their household assets and income was declining at an alarming rate.

Before getting organised under COs, VOs and LSO under the EU funded BRACE Programme, the herders were unaware of different bodies they could approach for support. However, the LSO provided them an enabling forum where they could discuss such communal issues among themselves and seek their solutions. The LSO leaders discussed the issue of the livestock owners in their UC and learnt that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is the right place to submit their request to seek support. The LSO leaders decided to meet the concerned officials of NDMA in Quetta city. The LSO leaders briefed the NDMA officials on how livestock is the only source of income for the poor families, and shortage of fodder in the natural pastures has been a cause of distress for them.

NDMA officials promised to provide 1,500 bags of feed supplement for distribution among the poor families. Leaders of

LSO Ittehad called a general meeting and invited all VO leaders to attend it. In this meeting, they discussed and decided the distribution plan and prepared a list of poor, eligible members across their UC. They then submitted the list to NDMA office and organised a distribution ceremony at a central place in their UC. They invited the eligible families as well as the NDMA representatives in the distribution ceremony and distributed the bags of feed supplement among the deserving families in a transparent manner. The beneficiary members were quite happy, they thanked the NDMA, FAO and the LSO leaders for assisting them in such a critical time of their lives. They expected similar support in the coming years so that they can manage their livestock in a healthy manner. The NDMA representatives appreciated the LSO leaders for conducting such a fair and transparent distribution campaign. They assured the LSO of their future support.



LSO leaders distributing bags of feed supplement among poor members

Provision of Solar Energy to Poor Families from Local Government

Another development issue that attracted the attention of the LSO leaders was the frequent load shedding of electricity in their UC. Research studies show that lack of electricity has a number of



LSO President distributing solar batteries and panels among poor members of his LSO

adverse effects on the people, like sleeplessness, inutility of home appliances, inefficient learning in children and incompleteness and delaying of tasks etc.; this reduces the overall performance in daily routines. An alternative and safer solution is solar energy. However, the initial investment cost of solar energy is so high that it is beyond the economic reach of poor families. So only well-off families have installed solar energy in their houses and are enjoying uninterrupted supply of electricity.

The LSO leaders decided to approach the UC Government to seek their financial support in providing solar energy for the poorest families. They first prepared a list of such families with the help of their member VOs and found that there are 200 deserving families across their UC. They then held a series of meetings with the UC Government and asked them to allocate funds for buying solar panels and batteries for these families. The UC Government allocated funds for buying solar panels and batteries for 85 poor families. The LSO leaders held a meeting of its General Body members and prioritised 85 most deserving families to receive the solar panels. The UC Government purchased the solar panels and batteries and informed the LSO leaders. The LSO leaders arranged a distribution ceremony in their office and invited the deserving family members to the ceremony. The LSO leaders distributed the solar panels and batteries among the deserving people in the presence of the representatives of the UC Government. Both the beneficiary members and LSO leaders appreciated the Local Government for this support and requested them to allocate more resources in the future for the same purpose. The UC Secretary was so happy with this fair and honest distribution that he promised to allocate as much resources as possible in the budget next year, to provide solar energy to the remaining poor families.



LSO President distributing solar batteries and panels among poor members of his LSO

Distribution of Food Packages among Poor Families from Jan Japan Foundation

The LSO leaders learnt that the Jan Japan Foundation, a local NGO owned and sponsored by Jan Japan Motors, was providing ration to the poor families affected by the country-wide lockdown imposed to control the spread of Coronavirus disease. The Executive Body members of the LSO arranged a meeting with the CEO of Jan Japan Foundation at his office. In this meeting, the LSO leaders briefed the CEO about the miserable economic condition of the poor, orphan and widowed families in their UC and asked him for support. The Jan Japan Foundation responded positively to the LSO leaders' request for help. The LSO leaders assured the CEO that they will identify the eligible families with the help of their VO leaders and distribute the rations in a transparent manner.

The Jan Japan Foundation provided 300 ration bags to the LSO leaders at their UC office. The LSO leaders prepared a list of poor families in a general meeting with the help of their VO leaders. They then shared the list with Jan Japan Foundation and planned a ration distribution ceremony at their UC office and invited the poor families to the ceremony. The ration bags were distributed among the nominated community members in the presence of Jan Japan Foundation team. The poor beneficiary families appreciated the generosity of Jan Japan Foundation and the selfless efforts of their LSO and VO leaders for helping them in such a crucial time. The team members of Jan Japan Foundation were so happy with the fair and transparent distribution of the ration bags that they assured the LSO leaders of their continued support.



LSO leaders meeting with the CEO of Jan Japan Foundation

Providing Missing Facilities in Local BHU through the District Health Officer and People's Primary Healthcare Initiative

The Basic Health Unit (BHU) is the sole health facility available for the UC members. However, the BHU was in need of a lot of improvements to increase its services to the common people. The LSO leaders visited the BHU and assessed the missing facilities in it. They found out that the positions of two health workers were vacant in the BHU. The supply of medicine from the Health Department and People's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) to the BHU was not sufficient to meet the demand, hence people had

to buy medicines from market which was a heavy financial burden on the poor people. Due to a high prevalence of mosquitoes, Malaria is rampant in the area. Timely diagnosis of Malaria helps in appropriate and effective treatment resulting in marked decrease in fatal cases. However, given there was a shortage of lab equipment for blood test in the BHU, people were not diagnosed and treated in a timely manner and thus had to suffer a lot. The death ratio in children due to Malaria was quite high. Furthermore, there was no female gynaecologist in the BHU, resulting in women were not receiving proper services.

The LSO leaders noted these points and visited the District Health Officer (DHO). They held a meeting with him in the presence of the local team leader of People's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) and briefed him on the missing facilities in their BHU and requested their support. The DHO and the PPHI team leader listened to them patiently and promised to fulfil their demands. The DHO posted two staff members to the BHU and provided a medical lab for blood testing of Malaria suspected patients. The PPHI team leader increased the quota of medicine for the BHU and promised to establish a gynaecology ward in the BHU.

Thus, with the productive linkages of the LSO leaders with Government Health Departments, they successfully arranged almost all important missing facilities in their BHU. As a result, the quality of services of this health facility has increased significantly for the 1,716 beneficiary households of UC Abdul Rehmanzai 2. Due to their positive role in improving the health facilities, the BHU staff is also happy with the LSO leaders.



LSO President meeting with DHO and PPHI Team Leader

Improvement in Security Situation of the UC Area with the Support of the Deputy Commissioner of Killa Abdullah

Safety and peace are essential prerequisites for economic growth, social harmony and well-being of common people. The UC area is quite vulnerable in terms of security. Cases of theft and robbery often take place in the UC area. To remedy this, the LSO leaders went to the office of the Local Government and held a meeting with Mr. Bashir Ahmed Barech, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) to bring the poor security situation to his notice. They requested him to increase the number as well as patrolling frequency of Levies in their UC area. The DC welcomed and appreciated their initiative and promised to fulfil their demands. He also asked the LSO leaders to keep a vigilant eye on the suspected criminals and inform him right away if the criminal is spotted, so he can take timely action. Since then, the staff of Levies and their patrolling frequency has increased in the UC area, resulting in a marked decrease in criminal offences in the area.



LSO President meeting with DC Killa Abdullah

Support to District Health Officer in Vaccination Campaigns in the UC

The District Health Officer (DHO) asked for support of LSO leaders for maximum coverage of vaccination campaigns in the UC area. The LSO leaders are now providing their full support to the vaccination teams, convincing refusal cases for vaccination of their mothers and children and ensuring 100% coverage of the intended population in each vaccination campaign. Due to these collaborative efforts, the local people are now enjoying door step vaccination services for their children and pregnant women. The DHO and his team are also happy with the LSO leaders for their effective facilitation role in increasing the coverage of vaccination.



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