



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 Dernali

 District Khuzdar	 Union Council Dernali	 Date of Formation 10-01-2019	 Total Households in Union Council 1,721	 Organised Households 1,046	 Coverage 61%
Number of COs  99 47 MEN 52 WOMEN		Number of VOs  21 11 MEN 10 WOMEN		# of General Body Members  33 ALL MEN	# of Executive Committee Members  11 ALL MEN

as of 31st March 2021

Union Council Dernali is located on the east side of Nall, and it is spread over 144 square km. LSO Dernali, Field Unit Nall, District Khuzdar, was formed on 10th January 2019 by 1,046 households, out of 1,721 households settled in the UC. The 1,046 households are organised into 99 Community Organisations (COs) and 21 Village Organisations (VOs) under the EU funded Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme (BRACE). After the formation of the Local Support Organisation (LSO) its leaders developed a Union Council Development Plan in close collaboration with the member VOs. The LSO leaders are now implementing the planned activities both on self-help basis as well as in collaboration with Government Agencies, elected members of Provincial and National Assembly and 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.



Installation of a Solar Powered Water Supply Scheme in Collaboration with Senator Khalid Bezanjo

Like other part of Balochistan, availability of clean drinking water is a souring issue in UC Dernali. Upon the identification of the community members, three Drinking Water Supply Schemes (DWSS) were constructed in three villages with the financial support of EU funded BRACE

Programme. However, due to resource constraints, no such project could be implemented in the fourth village Salai which was also facing similar problems. The issue was discussed in the LSO meeting and they decided to approach Senator Khalid Bezanjo to get resources from Government to execute the fourth DWSS project. The LSO leaders held a series of meetings with Senator Bezanjo and they briefed him on the issues faced by the villagers due to lack of access to clean drinking water and requested him to



The work in progress on the water supply project

allocate some resources for construction of a water bore project. Within a month of their interaction with the MPA, he allocated funds and the project was tendered; work on the project started in July 2021. Currently the bore work is in progress and it is expected that the project will be completed by end of August 2021. The project will benefit around 175 individuals, including 90 men and 85 women from 35 households in village Salai.



The work in progress on the water supply project

Opening of a Community School

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the schools were closed to control the fast spread of the coronavirus disease. However, this resulted in the decline of the quality of education for the students. The LSO leaders discussed this issue in their meeting and sought doable and sustainable solutions. It was suggested that community schools in the afternoons be set up for the girl and boy students at village or sub-village level if volunteer teachers are available locally. The people of village Purki piloted one such school for 50 girl and boy students to test the idea. The community school is housed in a large room of a local family, which provided it free of cost. A young man with BA level education was willing to teach at the school. The LSO leaders collected funds from well-off families and paid PKR 10,000 per month to the teacher as his honorarium. A number of young girls and boys who were unable to travel to the Government school which is quite far away from their settlement also enrolled in the school. Therefore, when the Government schools were opened after the reduction of coronavirus cases in the area, the village elders decided to continue the community school in the afternoon times. Looking at the benefits of the community school in village Purki, other villages of the UC have expressed their interest in opening similar schools. The leaders of LSO Dernali are planning to expand the community schools model to cover all interested villages and settlement of the UC. Since the community schools supplement and complement the Government Schools, they are having a marked impact on improving the quality of education of the local girls and boys.

Support to Poor Families Adversely Effected by COVID-19 Pandemic

When Government imposed a nation-wide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the local economy came to stand still in the LSO area. The poorest families who were living on daily incomes were badly effected and a famine like situation was created for them. The LSO leaders identified such vulnerable families, prepared lists with their details and submitted them to the Assistant Commissioner (AC). When the AC received rations for distribution among vulnerable families, he quickly distributed the ration bags among the vulnerable families according to the list submitted by the LSO. Around 150 vulnerable families received ration worth PKR 6,000 each. This helped the vulnerable families in a great manner.

On April 1, 2020, the Federal Government launched the Ehsaas Emergency Cash programme to support vulnerable families experiencing economic hardships exacerbated by the ongoing coronavirus crisis. The financial assistance under the programme was meant to help them

buy rations so that they don't go hungry. Unfortunately, a large number of eligible women were finding it difficult to get themselves registered with the programme. The LSO leaders, identified such women with the help of their VO leaders and helped them register with the programme via mobile apps. The LSO leaders helped around a 100 women with the registration process, the latter are happily getting benefits from the Ehsaas Emergency Case programme.

Ehsaas Kafaalat is another Government safety net programme through which it gives cash stipends of PKR 2,000 monthly and bank accounts to the most deserving and poorest women across the country. Through a parallel Ehsaas Policy Initiative, women also get better access to smartphones, as a step towards digital inclusion. The eligible women in the LSO area were having problems in getting themselves registered with the programme. To remedy this, the LSO leaders, formed a committee and tasked its members to help the eligible women. The committee reported that they have registered 50 eligible women under the new programme. So far, with the help of the LSO leaders, 150 poor women are linked with the Government safety net programmes across the UC.

Growing Organic Cotton in Collaboration with Agriculture Extension Department

In collaboration with Government Agriculture Extension Department, World Wild Fund (WWF) and Karachi Textile Sooty Organization have started a four-year project in April 2021 to grow organic cotton in Balochistan with special focus on small-scale farmers. The project has been initiated in Tehsil Nall, District Khuzdar. Under this project, the Agriculture Extension Department registers interested farmers and the WWF and KTSO establish Farmer Farm Schools at union council level to provide trainings on organic farming practices to the registered farmers. They provide organic seed, biological medicines to control the

pest, and technical knowledge on using manure instead of chemical fertilizer. KTSO will buy the organic cotton from these farmers on a premium price. Thus the project is expected to increase the farm products of small-scale farmers, reduce their operational cost and help protect the environment and ecosystem of the area.

When the LSO leaders learnt about the project, they identified the small-scale farmers from across their UC and submitted their details to the Agriculture Extension Department. They also motivated and helped the small-scale farmers in getting themselves registered. So far 100 small-scale farmers have been registered. The project is expected to improve the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiary farmers by increasing their farm yield through environment friendly agriculture.

Plantation of Forest Trees

Plant for Pakistan (Plant4Pakistan), also known as 10 Billion Tree Tsunami, is a five-year project to plant 10 billion trees across Pakistan from 2018 to 2023. The Community Institutions formed under the EU supported BRACE Programme are taking part in this Government programme. The LSO motivated its members for tree plantation and created a demand within the community for tree plantation. They then arranged around 700 forest tree saplings from the Government Agriculture Department and the Local Government and distributed them among the interested members, who planted them in their courtyards and farm fields. In addition to providing shade, fodder, fire wood and timber, the forest trees greatly improve the micro climate and aesthetic beauty of the rural villages.



LSO Leaders meeting with Agriculture Extension Department



LSO leaders distributing forest tree saplings among their members



EUROPEAN UNION

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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