Local Support Organisations (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 Silyaza Takai**

<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>Zhob</td>
<td>Takai</td>
<td>11-09-2018</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Support Organisation Silyaza Takai, District Zhob, was formed on September 11, 2018 by 538 member households organised into 41 COs and seven VOs. The leaders of LSO Silyaza Takai 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.

**Activities to Combat COVID-19 Pandemic**

When the Government imposed a country wide lockdown in March 2020 to control the spread of the coronavirus disease, the poor people of UC Silyaza Takai who mostly live on daily wage labour lost their source of income. Loss of employment along with shortage and inflation in prices of food items in the market created a serious economic and nutrition crisis in the region. Realising the plight of these families, the LSO representatives came forward to support them on an emergency basis. When the LSO representatives carried out a situation analysis in consultation with their VOs, provision of food items to the poorest families ranked as the top priority. Since the number of vulnerable families was quite large, the LSO representatives realised that they cannot meet their demand through local resource mobilisation. They approached elected representatives, NGOs and local affluent people for resource mobilisation, holding meetings with them to request resources to provide the needy with ration. Meanwhile, they conducted a survey to identify vulnerable families across the UC. As a result of their efforts, Human Development Foundation (HDF) provided rations bags to the LSO representatives, who distributed them among 100 poor households which were identified by the LSO representatives.
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Later on, the District Administration asked the LSO representatives to cooperate with them in distribution of ration among poor families. The LSO representatives shared the list of poorest families in the UC and helped the District Administration in distribution of ration bags. As a result of this coordinated work, the LSO representatives were successful in providing ration bags to another 100 poor households in the UC. The monetary value of these ration bags was over PKR 1.1 million.

Rahmat Khan, President of LSO Silyaza Takai said that it was the platforms of the LSO and its member VOs, organised under the EU funded BRACE Programme that facilitated identification of all eligible households so quickly and accurately. Without such a network of well-connected community institutions, the government and non-government donors would never have been able to reach all needy families in these critical times. In addition, on the instruction of the LSO representatives, the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) are delivering awareness sessions in COs detailing the signs and symptoms of the coronavirus disease, precautionary measures to be taken to remain safe from getting infected by the dangerous virus like wearing face masks, washing hands frequently with soap and avoiding crowded places.

Construction of a Bridge in Village Kadi Saroona Takai

A seasonal river flows through village Kadi Saroona. In rainy seasons, the river floods rendering it impossible to cross. This was challenging for the people on both sides of the river.

The villagers requested the LSO representatives to resolve their problem by constructing a bridge over the Silyaza River. The LSO representatives checked the proposed site of the bridge and estimated that it would cost in millions. Therefore, they decided to mobilise resources for construction of the bridge. They held meetings with the Secretary of their Union Council (UC) and requested him to allocate some funds for construction of the bridge. However, the UC Secretary said that he did not have enough resources at his disposal to finance such a large project. The LSO representatives then held meetings with their MPA, Haji Meta Khan Kakar and requested his favour for allocation of funds using his discretionary power. After a series of meetings, they were able to convince the MPA and he allocated PKR 130 million for construction of a Reinforced concrete bridge. The construction work on the bridge has started in July 2021 and it will be completed by the end of June 2022. The bridge will provide all weather communication services to the 682 families living in Takai villages.
Boring for Drinking Water in Collaboration with the Local Govt.

The villagers of Takai 1 and Takai 2 called a meeting with LSO members requesting them to construct a water supply scheme for the villagers to solve the issue of unavailability of safe drinking water. The LSO representatives checked the proposed site of the area and estimated that the project would cost PKR 1.2 million. The LSO separate the words to mobilise resources for the drinking water scheme. They first held meetings with the Local Government representatives in district Zhob and Secretary of their Union Council (UC), requesting them to allocate some funds to bore for the drinking water. After a series of meetings, they were able to convince the Local Government to allocate PKR 1.2 million to construct the drinking water scheme. The construction work for the project was completed over June to September 2019. The water scheme provides clean drinking water to 199 households of all villages Takai 1 and 2 in UC Silyaza Takai.

Preparation of CNICs of Women and Men Members

A large number of men and women in the UC had either not had their CNICs prepared at all or their CNICs have expired. This meant they were ineligible to receive the Government’s social services, like treatment at hospitals, cash grant from Zakat, Baitul Maal and EHSAA Programme etc. The representatives of Village Organisations (VOs) requested to the LSO leaders to support the locals in preparing their CNICs. With the help of VO leaders, the LSO representative made lists of men and women who needed CNICs. They then visited NADRA officers in Zhob city, requesting for a NADRA Mobile Van to make CNIC’s for the people of UC Silyaza Takai. NADRA sent their Mobile Van to different villages and as a result of that, 186 CNICs, including 105 CNICs of women and 81 CNICs of men were prepared. These people had also become eligible to cast their votes at the time of local bodies, provincial and national assembly elections.

Construction of Check Dam in Collaboration with the Irrigation Department

Water is an extremely scarce commodity in Balochistan. The 12-year long spell of drought has worsened the availability of water, especially for irrigation. Check dam is a useful infrastructure to conserve rain water to irrigate land. Dams also recharge the underground water level and hence restoring the dried karez system. Village Striyaza Takai had a suitable site for construction of a check dam. The members of village Striyaza Takai requested the LSO representatives to raise funds this purpose. The LSO representatives checked the proposed site of the check dam and estimated that it would cost in millions. Therefore, they decided to explore government resources for funding the construction of the check dam. They held meetings with their political representatives in provincial and national assemblies and requested them to allocate some funds for construction of the check dam. They were able to convince their Member National Assembly who allocated PKR 10.1 million for construction of a check dam. The construction work started in July 2019 and was completed in December 2019. A total of 121 households in village Striyaza Takai are benefitting from the check dam.
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.