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 Sotagan**

<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>Washuk</td>
<td>Sotagan</td>
<td>14-12-2018</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1708</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Support Organisation (LSO) Sotagan in District Washuk, was formed on 14th December 2018. With 1,708 member households organised into 42 village organisations (VOs) including 21 male and 21 female VOs at the village level. At the community level, 202 community organisations (COs) were formed including 101 male and 101 female COs. The EU-funded Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) programme aims to empower men and women in rural Balochistan to improve their lives through raising awareness about their rights, social and institutional accountability, and helping them organise themselves. The male and female leaders of organised community institutions (CI’s) are involved in planning and implementation of development activities through self-help initiatives and in collaboration with government stakeholders via organised and collective action.

**Self Help Initiative to Support a Cancer Patient**

Mohammad Salih, a father of three daughters and two sons and a member of UC Sotagan was suffering from blood cancer. Due to his deteriorating health condition, he was unable to provide for his family. The LSO leaders were approached by his wife in order to seek help. The LSO leaders set up a stall in the main market of the UC centre and collected PKR 800,000 in donations from the community for the cause. They paid PKR 500,000 for his treatment. However, Mohammad was unable to survive. The remaining amount of pkr 300,000 was used to establish a small diesel shop which was handed over to his eldest son. The community institution helped Mohammad’s family by providing them a sustainable means of income after his demise. His son now earns around 45,000 per month from the shop. With this income, he is now able to support his family.
Establishment of Examination Centre for FA/FSC students at UC level

Under the EU funded BRACE Programme, LSO leaders through democratic and participatory approach, develop village development plans (VDPs) and union council development plan (UCDP) at the village and UC level respectively. These plans identify development issues at each tier and map out existing gaps in skills development, infrastructure, and financial resources required for assistance to implement these plans.

One of the issues highlighted by the community members through this exercise was the absence of FA and FSC examination centre in their area. Due to absence of examination centre in their area, the cost of transportation to the examination centre at the district headquarter was an additional PKR 20,000 per student. The high cost of transport led to a large number of students discontinuing their education after matriculation.

Through the efforts of LSO members, an application was submitted to the Balochistan Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education Quetta requesting to establish an examination centre at Tehsil Mashkail. The LSO leaders were notified that the local community would have to pay 120,000 for its establishment since they do not meet the minimum number of students enrolled. The LSO leaders collected voluntary funds from its members and other donors in the community. An amount of PKR 120,000 was raised within two days, and paid to the Board, who approved the establishment of examination centre.

Through collective action, collaboration with the government, and community’s willingness to help themselves, the LSO leaders succeeded in establishing the examination centre at Government High School Mashkail. During the month of June 2021, a total of 19 boys and girls gave their FA and FSC exams at the centre. This resulted in saving of resources and time for these students as well as addressing the issue of discontinuing education.

Registration of People Under Ehsaas Cash Grant

Under the Government of Pakistan (GOP) Ehsaas programme, an emergency cash programme was initiated to help the vulnerable members of society adversely affected by the coronavirus crisis. The criteria to benefit from the financial assistance under the programme required beneficiaries to register themselves. Due to high rate of illiteracy, the beneficiaries were unable to do so. The gap was identified and reported in time to the LSO leaders who formed a committee of educated individuals to help in registration of the eligible members. The Committee worked from the LSO office, registering 90 eligible families. These families now receive PKR 12,000 on six monthly basis which helps them in buying essential food items to meet their daily dietary requirements in these unprecedented times. Through addressing the issue, community members were able to bridge the gap between community needs and governments efforts.
**Installation of Hand Pumps for Clean Drinking Water**

In a number of villages in UC Sotagan, people previously used water from nearby wells. Since these wells were not covered, it resulted in impurities and harmful substances contaminating the water, making them breeding grounds for water borne diseases and unsafe for drinking. Through increased awareness and collective call to action, the LSO leaders contacted an NGO named Manzil that works in their area. Upon collaboration with the NGO, LSO members received funds for installation of 25 hand pumps in various villages across the UC. Due to this investment, the people of these villages now have access to clean drinking water for themselves as well as their livestock. Consequently, the incidence of water-borne diseases has drastically reduced in these villages.

**Environmental Protection Through Planting Trees**

With increased knowledge and sensitisation among community members to foster a healthy and sustainable environment, the LSO took an initiative to plant maximum trees in their UC. According to the community members, trees are valuable assets that provide fresh air, they are home to many birds and mammals, and provide food and shade. To take up this initiative, LSO leaders contacted Agriculture and Forest Departments for provision of supplies for planting. The Agriculture Department provided 350 plants and the Forest Department gave 500 rooted plants to the LSO leaders. The LSO leaders distributed these plants among community members to cultivate on their land. They also planted trees in public places including courtyards of local mosques, government schools, and health centres.

A total of 630 families benefited from this activity. The LSO leaders have decided to continue plantation campaigns in the future as well.