



LSO Initiatives

Local Support Organisation Sonehri Roshni

District:	Ghotki
Union Council:	Bhetoor
Date of Formation:	June 12, 2011
Total Households in Union Council:	5,160
Organised Households:	1,910
Coverage:	37%
No of Community Organisations (COs):	151 (All women)
Number of Village Organisations (VOs):	39 (All women)
No of General Body Members:	39 (All women)
No of Executive Committee Members:	15 (All women)

Social Mela on Women's Rights and Social Issues

In June 2012, the LSO leaders organised a social Mela, or festival in the union council. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness among the men and women of the area about various social issues such as violence against women, karokari (i.e., blaming women for

What are LSOs?

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 mobilise rural communities 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, donors agencies and the private sector.

adultery and killing them without any investigation or trial), child marriages and the threat of polio. Using banners, speeches and a theatre performance, the Mela also conveyed messages regarding the importance of personal and environmental hygiene, as well as the benefit of having a computerised national identity card (CNIC) and savings. Around 500 men and women from the union council attended, and as a result of the event resistance to polio vaccinations was eliminated; all children in the union council are receiving the vaccine and many men and women have gotten their CNIC.

Support to IDPs in the 2012 Flood

In August 2012, a huge flood hit the lower parts of Sindh and washed away farms, fields, houses and many vital assets belonging to the people of Bhetoor. Overnight, they became internally displaced persons (IDPs). Some 76 flood affected households from Sanghar moved to Khanpur, Ghotki. The LSO members gave these families shelter in their own homes for one week, while they collected donations in cash and kind from the local families and shop keepers and arranged alternative shelter, food and clothing for the IDPs for one month in Khanpur city. They coordinated with the city government Khanpur, shifted them to the government school for shelter and assured the provision of rations, medical help and other relief facilities till the time that they were able to go home. This was the first time in the history of this feudal society that women went out to the city and set up donation stalls, collected donations from shopkeepers and business owners and worked with the government officials for over a month.

Health Camp for Hepatitis Screening

Most of the villages in Bhetoor still lack a proper supply of clean drinking water, thus affecting

personal and household hygiene and increasing the incidence of Hepatitis B and C. The LSO approached the Government Health Department and organised two medical camps for testing and vaccinations for Hepatitis. During these camps, 1,150 men, women and children were tested. It was found that 30% of the population in village Rano Khan and 5% of the population of two other villages were Hepatitis B positive. The unaffected people were vaccinated and those who were affected were referred to government hospitals in the main cities for proper treatment. Five Hepatitis B patients were referred to Aga Khan Hospital for treatment and with financial support from the Benazir Income Support Programme they were cured. The LSO spent PKR. 22,000 on these camps, an amount which they raised by collecting donations from their members.

Rally on the Eve of International Women's Day and Mothers' Day

The LSO and VO leaders conducted a rally in the main market of Khanpur City on the eve of International Women's Day in 2012. This was the very first time in the history of the area that around 500 women participated in such a large event in the centre of the city. They were holding banners and chanting slogans in favour of women's rights and equal status. Local and national news channels including Geo News covered the event and the local feudal lords took it very seriously, owing to the larger number of people there. As a result of the visibility which the event generated in the media and throughout the community, there was no backlash against the men and women who participated.

Emboldened by the event, the community also celebrated International Mother's day with similar enthusiasm.