



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 Sada Bahar Gharshinan

<p>District</p>  <p>Pishin</p>	<p>Union Council</p>  <p>Gharshinan</p>	<p>Date of Formation</p>  <p>15-06-2019</p>	<p>Total Households in Union Council</p>  <p>1,563</p>	<p>Organised Households</p>  <p>1,430</p>	<p>Coverage</p>  <p>91%</p>		
<p>Number of COs</p>  <p>153</p> <p>61 WOMEN'S</p>		<p>Number of VOs</p>  <p>62</p> <p>26 WOMEN'S</p>		<p># of General Body Members</p>  <p>101</p> <p>33 WOMEN'S</p>		<p># of Executive Committee Members</p>  <p>11</p> <p>06 WOMEN'S</p>	

LSO Sada Bahar, UC Gharshinan from District Pishin was revitalised in June 2019, by 1,430 member households organised in 153 COs and 62 VOs. The leaders of LSO Sada Bahar Gharshinan 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.

Re-opening of Closed Primary School and Upgradation to Middle Level

The Government Primary School in village Killi Weria was not functioning properly due to frequent absence of teachers. Before the formation of the LSO, the people of the area believed they had no right to intervene in the functioning of government institutions and that it is the responsibility of the Government Authorities to keep their institutions functional. However, after they were organised in COs, VOs and LSO under the EU funded BRACE Programme, they realised that they can play an important role in keeping the Government intuitions functional and complain against the corrupt and regularly absent staff to their Higher Authorities to bring them at task. Therefore, the LSO leaders complained against the absent teachers with the District Education Authorities, who took actions against them and ensured their regular attendance in the school.

Meanwhile, the LSO leaders noticed that two classrooms and the boundary wall of the school are not in proper condition and both require immediate repair. The LSO leaders estimated the cost of the repair work and contacted Government Education Department

and other organisations for funds. They received PKR 2 million from Education Department and UNICEF. They carried out the repair work themselves and contributed in the form of free labour. In this way, the LSO improved the school building and made the school environment conducive for receiving proper education for the students.

The LSO leaders then put up an application to the District Education Officer (DEO) asking him to upgrade the Primary School to a Middle School, because the Middle School is quite far away from this village, and a number of students discontinue their education at Primary level due to difficulties in commuting to the Middle School. Looking at the commitment and efforts of the LSO leaders in improving the condition of the Primary School, the DEO upgraded the Primary School to Middle level. Now 120 boy students are enrolled in the Middle School and are receiving proper education.

Fight Against COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic adversely effected the livelihoods of the men and women of UC Gharshinan due to a weak public services,

especially in health sector, combined with infrastructural deficit and communication gaps. The LSO leaders took an active part in taking preventive measures against the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, they provided support to the vulnerable families during the critical times of the lockdown period. Below is a brief description of their efforts in this regard:

1. The Government imposed a nation-wide lockdown to prevent the spread of the viral disease; consequently, the poorest families, especially the daily wage earners lost their daily income. Simultaneously, the closure of public transport led to a steep rise in the prices of food items. These events resulted in a food crisis among the poorest segments of the population in the UC. The LSO leaders identified such families in consultation with their VO activists and prepared a list. They then went to Quetta and approached officials of World Food Organisation (WFO), Red Crescent Pakistan, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Tameer-e-Khalaq Foundation (TKF) and briefed them on the food crisis in their UC, requesting them to provide food and cash to poor and deserving families. The LSO leaders received 35 ration bags from WFO and distributed them among 35 poor families. They also received cash grant from Red Crescent Pakistan and distributed it among 35 poor member women of the LSO. Each woman was paid PKR 21,000.



Distribution of ration bags among poor families

2. The poor families were facing difficulties in registering themselves under the EHSAAAS Cash Grant Programme announced by the Federal Government to support the vulnerable families effected economically by the COVID-19 pandemic. The LSO leaders helped these families, registering 62 families by sending their profiles via mobile messages. 38 families registered by the LSO activists received PKR 12,000 each from EHSAAAS Cash Grant programme.

3. The LSO leaders realised that a number of eligible families are not registered with Government's Zakat programme. They noted their profiles and submitted a list to the local Chairman of Zakat. In this way, they were able to register 25 eligible

families under the Zakat programme. These families are now receiving Zakat fund on a regular basis.



LSO leaders registering poor families in EHSAAAS Cash Grant Programme and educating them about the programme

4. The Government formed National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) to combat the pandemic in coordination with Provincial authorities and the community institutions formed and nurtured by the Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) in 1,500 rural UCs of Pakistan. BRSP signed MoUs with district Governments, including that of District Pishin to provide the needful support to the Government. BRSP also gave the contact numbers of the leaders of LSO Sada Bahar to the local Government Authorities. The Government Authorities contacted the LSO leaders and asked for their cooperation to fight against the viral disease. On the demand of the Government Authorities, the LSO nominated their President and General Secretary at the UC level Committee formed to distribute ration and soap bars among poorest families and Trace, Test and Quarantine (TTQ) of suspected members. The Government Health staff trained the LSO leaders in awareness raising about COVID-19. The LSO leaders and CRPs performed their due roles efficiently and effectively and provided full support to the Government Authorities.



Training of LSO leaders on awareness raising on COVID-19 by Health Department

5. The LSO leaders identified and submitted a list of 100 vulnerable families from the entire Union Council to the office

of Assistant Commissioner (AC) Karezat. The Government authorities provided 70 food packages to the LSO leaders, and they distributed these packages among 32 poor families.

6. The local people had no proper understanding about the health risks of the viral disease, nor did they have any idea about the type of preventive measures to remain safe from it. Therefore, on the advice of the LSO leaders, the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) have been delivering awareness sessions on the preventive measures of COVID-19 in their routine Community Awareness Toolkits (CATs) sessions in the men and women COs conducted under the EU funded BRACE Programme.
7. The President, General Secretary and other Executive Body members organised and conducted awareness sessions on the preventive measures against COVID-19 virus in 10 villages.
8. They also made announcement from 8 local mosques and advised the masses to follow the SOPs announced by the Government Authorities and take preventive measures, like keeping a distance of six feet with others, avoiding crowds, washing their hands with soap frequently and wearing a face mask while going to markets, visiting relatives and meeting with Government and NGO staff.

Organised a Free Medical Camp in Collaboration with Govt. and Other Health Organisations

The health facilities are very poor in the UC. There is only one BHU in the UC, which is neither equipped with the required equipment



Some scenes of the Free Medical Camp organised by the LSO



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Some scenes of the Free Medical Camp organised by the LSO

and staff, nor does it have an adequate supply of medicines. Therefore, the majority of the poor people, mainly women, who do not have enough resources to go to Quetta city for treatment, suffer a lot. After formation of the LSO, they discussed the health issues faced by their members in their meeting and sought solutions. One idea that they all liked and approved was to organise a free medical camp at their UC, with the help and collaboration of Government Health Department and other hospitals and health practitioners in Quetta city. The Executive Body members of the LSO conducted several meetings with Government Health Department, PPHI, Red Crescent and other organisations and sought their contribution in the Free Medical Camp. They provided free medicines and sent their Medical Officers to serve at the Free Medical Camp.

The LSO leaders, with the support of BRSP staff, organised the Free Medical Camp. They informed their members of the time and place of the Free Medical Camp and ensured that the information was passed on to all CO members by their VO leaders through mobile messages. This resulted in a huge turnout at the Free Medical Camp. A total of ten male and female Medical Officers provided their free services in the Medical Camp and around 3,500 men and women patients received free treatment. The Medical Officers also diagnosed the patients with chronic diseases and provided them with useful medical advice for proper treatment.

- Reported by:** Mohammad Ali Azizi, Specialist Social Mobilisation, RSPN
- Acknowledgment:** Hameed ullah Kakar, CBO Pishin, BRSP
Akbar Khan Achakzai, Manager HID, BRSP
- Edited by:** Zahra Rao, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, BRACE, RSPN



Rural Support Programmes Network
IRM Complex, 3rd Floor. Plot# 7, Sunrise Avenue
(Off Park Road), Near COMSATS University,
Islamabad, Pakistan.
Phone: +92-51-8491270-99, Fax: +92-51-8351791
www.rspn.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BRACEProgramme