



EUROPEAN UNION



Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme

SUCCESS is funded by the European Union



Social mobilisation on ground: The formation of Local Support Organisation (LSO) Masoo Bozdar

*Nadir Ali Shah and Sultana Kori, Field Researchers, RSPN SUCCESS
October 2017*

The Local Support Organisation (LSO) Masoo Bozdar was formed on July 26, 2017, by the Village Organisations (VOs) fostered in union council Maso Bozdar by National Rural Support Programme (NRSP). The LSO Masoo Bozdar has a total of 26 female members comprising the general body and representing 13 VOs. Ms Sami Akram, manager of Ghulam Hussain Laghari Community Organisation CO-1, was elected as President of the LSO. Her household’s poverty score is 10. She has completed her primary education and is a house maker. Currently, she is unable to work on the fields as a labourer due to her kidney problem as she has only one kidney. She was worried about her deteriorating health conditions as she could not afford the treatment due to her household’s meagre sources of income.

Under the European Union (EU) funded SUCCESS programme, she has received Micro Health Insurance (MHI) card and feels somewhat relieved now. In her words, “a few days back, I received the MHI card which I consider a big support to help me with my kidney problem. Now, I can avail this health service without any further wait. Due to poverty, I could not go to hospitals for the treatment.”



Members of Local Support Organisation (LSO) Masoo Bozdar

Sharing about the role and responsibilities towards LSO members Ms Sami said, “Our LSO’s general body members will have to conduct regular meetings, maintain financial records, carry out LSO development planning, provide Income Generating Grants (IGG) and Community Investment Funds (CIF) to the Community Institutions (CIs). Most of these benefits will be provided to the poor households as per their household poverty scores. In addition, our LSO will allocate funds and approve infrastructure schemes for the villages.” She added, “I feel confident that I will lead my LSO Masoo Bozdar in the right direction with the support of LSO members to solve some of our problems.”

Another LSO member, Ms Shabeeran was elected as general secretary of the LSO Masoo Bozdar. Her household’s poverty score is 36. She has also completed her primary education, is enthusiastic about social work, and aims to lead her community members to bring some positive change within the community. In her words, “I like SUCCESS programme because it is women-centric and is

intended to help poor women. I realise that we, all as responsible members of the society, must play our part in order to make our LSO more active to achieve the desired results. I am sure that with our collective efforts a good time will come for us when all poor women will, be at least hand-to-mouth, and not starve.”

The General Body members of LSO Masoo Bozdar elected a 12-member executive body to run the day to day affairs of the LSO. The executive body included six office bearers and six members: Ms Sami Akram (President), Ms Basheeran (General Secretary), Ms Dhanjani (Vice President), Ms Ayesha (Finance Secretary), Ms Fapi (Information Secretary), Ms Zainab (Joint Secretary), Ms. Natho Bai, Ms Roe Momin, Ms Anu Dhano, Ms Azizan, and Ms. Bhagul (members).

According to Mr Aslam (Capacity Building Officer-NRSP), “during the formation of LSO, we faced difficulty in bringing women from different villages together at one place because they live away from each other. The UC Masoo Bozdar covers a wide geographical area so it required intensive field visits to members of different COs and VOs to convince them to come out of their villages to participate in the LSO formation meeting. Some of the women demanded transport facility and some agreed to participate on condition with the permission of the male members of their community.” He added, “however, we continued our efforts of social mobilisation and held dialogue with all the stakeholders of community. At the end, we succeeded in convincing the community members to allow their female members to take part in the LSO formation and provided transport facility to those who needed it.”

It was a challenge for the NRSP staff to convince the rest and gather all the women from different villages for the LSO formation because women had never taken part in such kind of activities before, except those who had completed the trainings of Community Management Skills Training (CMST) and Leadership Management Skills Training (LMST) under SUCCESS. Therefore, it was a completely new activity for them and took them some time to understand the concept of LSO and what their role will be as its member. Aslam went on saying, “another challenge for us is to find out the office for the LSO which must be central to all villages of UC Masoo Bozdar. It must have a power connection, hand pump facility and availability of a bathroom. We are searching for it and will take all the LSO members on board before opening of the LSO office.”

Ms Ayesha, a LSO general body member said, “We are waiting to start our activities in our union council. Currently, our LSO is arranging a meeting to finalise the location for the office. I am cognizant of the fact that we may face challenges as a member of LSO because it is a huge responsibility. However, I am passionate to initiate my activities.” Mr Iqbal, 36-year-old, high school graduate, a tenant farmer, and Ms Ayesha’s son added, “SUCCESS is a women specific programme which is for the betterment and economic development of poor women. The programme will work even better once these women understand its details completely, they will work better towards its contribution. However, one possible hurdle to their work could be the low level of literacy among them”.

LSO members are looking forward to discuss their problems and work on the potential solutions in the upcoming meetings. According to LSO member, Ms Fapi, “after CO and VO formation, the confidence of the male members of our community has increased to some extent. They allow us to work as a member of LSO which is a very positive thing. We are now free to take our decisions to lead LSO activities.” Sami’s husband opined, “I am happy that my wife has become president of LSO Masoo Bozdar which is a very good thing. However, it is a huge responsibility for her to lead the poor women of her community. I believe that women must come forward and play their constructive role for the betterment of the community. After having Community Management Skills Training (CMST) and Leadership Management Skills Training (LMST), LSO members are better equipped to work for their union council.”