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Mansehra overview, NWFP

Post emergency assessment and achievements

FAO supported the livelihoods of thousands of affected households in response to the disaster caused by the floods in 2007 in the provinces of Balochistan and Sindh. The FAO project ‘ emergency assistance to crop production and livestock and strengthening to rapidly restore agriculture based livelihoods in flood affected areas of Balochistan and Sindh’ received funding from Central Emergency Response Fund. FAO assistance restored lost productivity of livestock in Balochistan and provided support to small farmers in crop production in Sindh. The livestock support implemented by Relief International, comprised of distribution of inputs such as urea molasses blocks, compound feed, sorghum seeds, and vaccination and de-worming of 1,73898 small and large ruminants targeting the three districts of Bolan, Kharan and Jhal Magsi in Balohistan. The crop production component implemented by Indus Resource Centre included distribution of 35 mt of rice seed, 14 mt of sorghum seed, 87.5 mt of DAP and 175 mt of urea among 1,750 households in the flood affected districts of Dadu and Kamber in Sindh. The package per farmer comprised of 20 kg of rice seed, 8 kg sorghum seeds, 100 kg of urea and 50 kg of DAP.



FAO provided seed crop.



Livestock support in Balochistan.



FAO Agronomist holds a discussion with farmers in Sindh.



Chandar's cattle made headlines in the local newspapers for producing 3 to 5 kg of milk daily.

Post emergency assessment showed that the beneficiaries found livestock assistance to be useful and effective at a time when the fodder was scarce. The figures highlight that there was an increase in food intake for 53%, in income for 20% and in savings for 14% beneficiaries respectively. With inputs and technical support for de-worming/vaccination, the physical condition of most of the animals improved from lean to good resulting in better milk production by animals,

better food intake by beneficiaries and in some cases, the households were able to return their debts also.

For agriculture the assessment results indicated that distribution of quality input effectively met timely needs of the targeted communities. Small farmers in Sindh are dependent on local money lender for purchasing agriculture inputs and the FAO support reversed the situation for a number of farmers from going into debt. The rice production increased three folds when compared with the local seed variety and the agriculture produce recovered at the rate of 15%. The support provided also improved, although at minimal level, the socio-economic conditions of people suffering from floods.

Maize seed production of high yielding cultivar

Of the total cropped area in the Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK), wheat is grown on 37 % and maize on 50% land respectively. In Sohmani sub-division of district Bhimber, maize is grown on an area of 12,037 acres out of total cropped area of 15,445 acres in summer. The cultivation of maize has been mainly adopted in cool climates such as Kashmir where traditionally it is a staple food and its straw is used as dry fodder. The low yielding potential of traditional cultivars and their repeated cultivation has made them susceptible to diseases and insect attacks further reducing the yields. A few high yielding cultivars have been grown in the area with cultivar ‘Kashmir Gold’ giving the best results. With line sowing and the adoption of recommended fertilization process, it yields 60% to 70% more than the traditional cultivars and is also preferred by the local population because of its taste. However, its cultivation on large scale could not be supported due to shortage of timely availability of its seed.

The local farmers have taken the initiative to produce the seed and made sufficient quantities available to other communities in time for the sowing season. Selected farmers have an area of 30 acres designated for seed multiplication where cultivation is carried out strictly adhering to the conditions essential for seed production. Previous experience with this maize cultivar in the area and giving due consideration to the present crop conditions provides a fair estimate of about 32,000 to 33,000 kg of seeds being produced enough for 1,300 to 1,400 acres sown annually in the valley. This will fulfil the timely supply of seed in bulk and provide the benefit of being acclimatized to the local conditions. In addition, this will also produce 50,000 to 60,000 kg of quality dry fodder valued by the farmers.

Since the crop is sown in a rain fed area, it was feared that germination might be affected adversely due to unexpected drought. In order to overcome this problem, maize nurseries were raised and plants grown to fill the germination gaps resulting in the availability of desired number of plants. In order to get rid of a gigantic problem of weeds in the area, secondary gift of nitrogen fertilizer was given as plant placement besides hoeing. On one hand, it checked weed germination and on the other reduced the amount of fertilizer required.



Line sowing

Traditional broadcast sowing

Transplanting to fill the gaps

Individual plant fertilization

FAO and MEDA unite for women empowerment in Balochistan

The FAO Pakistan and MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) have joined hands to further enhance the scope of Balochistan Agricultural Livelihoods project through an agreement to help women earn more income. Mr. Gamal Mohamad Ahmed, FAO Representative a.i. in Pakistan signed a Letter of Agreement with Ms. Helen Loftin Regional Project Manager Mennonite Economic Development Associates to initiate activities on Women’s Economic Development as part of the FAO executed and USAID funded Balochistan Agricultural Livelihoods project.



Signing ceremony between FAO and MEDA

Under this Letter of Agreement, the project will make available US\$ 44,696 to MEDA, in support of an inception phase which includes, training of staff and beneficiaries undertaking a baseline survey and also develop systems compatibility between MEDA and FAO ground operations in preparation for a 27 month follow-on project. In the follow-on project MEDA in partnership with FAO will assist homebound women from traditional societies in the five districts of Balochistan along the Afghan border.

Besides bringing expertise to the overall project that is outside the traditional food and agriculture focus of FAO's mandate, MEDA will focus on women's economic empowerment through development of the marketing of hand crafted garments traditionally produced by women in the project operational area. This will form a sub component of the Balochistan Livelihoods project that synergises with the agricultural production and marketing activities to benefit population of the remote communities.

Construction of a fair weather link road

Sahlialn Maldialian is a village which is about an hour's drive from west of Bagh in PAK. The village has five hamlets with almost three hundred households that do not have access to the main road. They have to walk for an hour to reach it. The village community with support from the Relief International, an INGO identified the need to construct a fair weather link road. In the past, people of the area suffered in medical emergencies, there were delays and problems with the transportation of daily goods and construction materials to and from the village while women and children found it difficult to commute going to schools, fetching water etc. It also raised the expenses of the families living in this area.

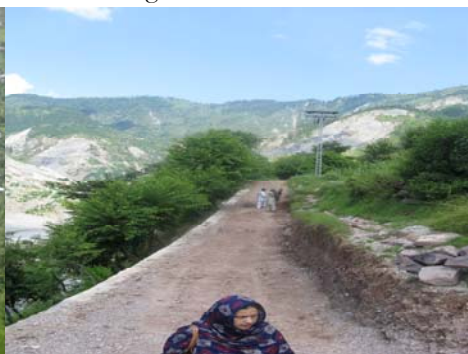
The village community and the Relief International got the approval for the building of the link road from District Reconstruction Advisory Committee in June 2008. The community contributions for the intervention were both in cash and kind and it was more than two times the approved budget of RS 73,2930.

The link road resulted in a measureable reduction in transportation cost positively impacting the lives of the community. Before they were not able to get easy access to different facilities. Another outcome was the establishment of eleven fruit orchards covering an area of eighty-eight kanals with the support from Citizen Network for Action of USA (CNFA) that had previously refused to assist this community due to no road access. CNFA also provided fruit plants and fencing for the orchards with 30% cost shared by community.

Riaz, a local farmer said, "The link road has changed our lives, I have re-established my farm and am now selling my products in the market with the vehicles transporting vegetables and fruits right from my doorstep, my children are commuting to school easily, and I can now reach the hospital on time in an emergency, this gives our community a ray of hope to live a better and comfortable life with a handsome earning from the land".



Link road connecting Sahlialn Maldialian village near Bagh to the main road.



Newly constructed Talbatta link road.



Rehabilitation and widening of village link road at Pekho Nakar village in district, Abbottabad.

European Union and FAO combat food crisis in Pakistan

The European Union (EU) is financing a project worth € 40 million to combat rising food prices in Pakistan, aiming to improve the food security for over 0.5 million of the most vulnerable people in food-deficient areas of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

The project 'Combating Rising Food Prices in Pakistan – Addressing the negative impact of rising food prices on food

insecure and vulnerable households in Pakistan’ was sealed in a signing ceremony between the Government of Pakistan and the European Commission on 31 July 2009 at Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The ceremony was attended by H.E. Nazar Mohammad Gondal – Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture; H.E. Jan de Kok – EU Ambassador to Pakistan; Mr Gamal Mohamad Ahmed - FAO Representative a.i ; UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Fikret Akcura including senior officials from the government and the UN.



Signing ceremony at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, July 2009

The recent rise in food prices has significantly worsened the food security situation in the country. Targeted investments in agriculture, including the immediate provision of seeds and fertilizers, are an urgent and time critical element of any attempt to enhance food production and combat rising food prices.

The EU "Food Facility" is the European Union’s €1 billion (113 billion rupees) response to the food crisis, showing EU’s firm commitment to help poor countries boost agricultural production especially in a time that hunger is on the rise even more because of the global economic crisis. The EU is providing an additional € 10 million (1.1 billion rupees) in support of national and international NGOs for working on similar initiatives.

Status of agriculture and livelihoods in the conflict affected areas

Initial findings from the damage assessment conducted by the FAO and district government departments in July 2009 indicated devastation to grain, fruit and vegetable production in the conflict-affected districts of Shangla, Swat, Lower Dir, Upper Dir and Malakand and Bajaur Agencies. Losses were estimated at 62 percent for vegetables, 56 percent of the fruit production, 47 percent to the wheat crop, 58 percent of rice and 49 percent of the tobacco crop. The damage appraisal also indicated 33 percent loss to the livestock sector. The returning farmers need immediate livestock (fodder, medication/vaccination) and agriculture assistance (tools, seeds and fertilizers) to start farming again for food security and livelihoods. Many returning farmers were unable to harvest the wheat crop due to early displacement and have lost summer plantation time.

There is a severe funding shortfall in the Agriculture Cluster, which has only received 11 percent of the US \$21.9 million needed. If urgent assistance to the returned IDPs to Buner, Lower Dir, Swat and Bajaur is not provided to restore their farm-based livelihoods, it is very likely to negatively impact on the current peace restoration process, which could further lead to longer-term external food aid dependency and reduce the likelihood of stability in the conflict-affected districts.



Children in Kach Garhi camp, Peshawar NWFP – photo credits Amjad WFP



IDP returning from the Humanitarian hub, Swabi Mardan NWFP – photo credits Amjad WFP



IDPs returning to their places of origin in Swat from Swabi Mardan, NWFP – photo credits Amjad WFP



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