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Farmers carrying agriculture input in the flood affected areas of Dadu, Sindh.

Community Investment Funds (CIF) workshop in Muzaffarabad

On 25th March, the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) together with FAO organised a half-day workshop in Muzaffarabad on the topic of the Community Investment Fund, as a part of its Livelihoods Rehabilitation Strategy. The participants were Programme Managers and Accounts Officers of the 4 District Rehabilitation Units (DRU) in Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) where Livelihoods Coordination Units (LCU) were established under the Sida-funded FAO project to assist ERRA with 'Project to Assist ERRA and its Partners in Restoring Livelihoods in the Earthquake Affected Areas of Pakistan'; Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Bagh and Poonch. The technical officers that FAO employed to support the LCUs were also present. The objective of the workshop was to explain the dynamics of CIF process, its implementation, and to get feedback on the constraints being faced by the District Rehabilitation Units (DRU). A similar workshop was organized on 18th March in



Community Investment Funds workshop in Muzaffarabad

Abbottabad, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) for the Provincial Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (PERRA) and the DRUs of the five earthquake affected districts in the province covered by the strategy: Abbottabad, Mansehra, Battagram, Shangla and Kohistan.

Javaid Qaiser, FAO project manager, gave a brief presentation on the project. Syed Mujtaba Hussain, Director Economic Sectors ERRA and Project Director, followed with a detailed presentation on the Community Investment Funds process. The presentations were followed by interactive questions and answers. Dr. Syed Asif Hussain, Director General of the State Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (SERRA) also participated in the workshop and gave his input on the Livelihoods project in general and issues related to the Community Investment Funds.

Part of ERRA's Livelihoods Rehabilitation Strategy, the Community Investment Funds are a resource that is made available by ERRA where high priority needs of the affected populations have not met with support from other sources – NGO, Government or other donors. The distribution of funds is determined on the basis of the Community Livelihoods Rehabilitation Plans (CLRP). These are community-centred planning exercises facilitated by NGOs and Government Line Departments in order to prioritize the community identified needs to rehabilitate livelihoods destroyed by the 2005 earthquake. To date a total of 839 such plans have been formulated and RS126.24 million has been released under the Community Investment Funds facility.

Management based on sound knowledge of fishery resources

Pakistan's marine resources are a direct source of livelihoods for over a million people and have supported fishing communities for generations. Poor knowledge base of the fishery sector has at present largely confined marine fishing activities to the shallow coastal waters along the coasts of Balochistan and Sindh. In order to reduce the fishing effort along the coast, possible offshore deep-water fishing grounds need to be investigated through exploratory scientific fishery resources appraisal surveys. The project *Support to the Fishery Resources Appraisal in Pakistan* intends to provide a sound appraisal of the country's coastal and offshore fishery status.

The five-year project costed at US\$ 5 835 548 is funded by the Government of Pakistan. The project will be executed by the Marine Fisheries Department with the technical support of the FAO Fishery Department. The Project Coordination Unit will ensure maximum synergy and complementarities of activities of the Department in close liaison with the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research (IMR).

Fisheries administrators, managers, scientists and technicians are the primary while the fishers and all those involved in the fishing industry in Pakistan are the secondary beneficiaries. The project plans to establish a framework for continued and timely appraisal of national marine fishery resources for developing sustainable and responsible fisheries and their effective utilization.

The offshore pelagic survey is scheduled to start in the last week of April and the proposed twenty days programme does not conflict with the onset of monsoons in late May. Despite initial delay, two Marine Fisheries Department officials have participated in a pre-survey training programme consisting of a two-day briefing in acoustic data processing by IMR staff and then nine days at-sea training on a Barents Sea demersal survey. The recruitment of the new staff for the project is ongoing but it will be many weeks before they start working.

Capacity building: October 2008 earthquake in Balochistan

In October 2008, an intense earthquake, measuring 6.5 on richter scale, hit Ziarat and Pishin districts of Balochistan province affecting some 4,600 families and displacing 70,000 people. The earthquake damaged fruit and grain stocks and stores, destroyed livestock shelters and killed animals. It also affected the local irrigation systems and the subsequent landslides have further damaged crops, fruit orchids and other vegetation besides negatively impacting the fragile ecosystem.



Adam Khan one of the beneficiaries trained in earthquake resistant animal shelter technology, Ziarat Balochistan.

The earthquake significantly affected the livelihoods of the affected people. Livestock farming plays a key role and is considered an important financial asset for all livestock owners, providing food and income. Whether sheep, goat, cattle, buffalo or poultry farming, most farmers keep livestock to assist in their agricultural ploughing or as a source of income in the form of selling dairy and egg products. On average there is one buffalo per household, with some having even two to three heads and most working towards purchasing more. Farmers living in the earthquake affected areas, traditionally use baniyan, an animal shelter having walls made of mud mixed with straw or loose stones with a wooden slab serving as a roof. These baniyan shelters collapsed in the earthquake killing livestock within.

In response to these losses, FAO together with a partner NGO, Taraqee Foundation, embarked on a programme to rehabilitate livestock farming in the earthquake affected districts funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). In order to provide a sustainable solution, FAO assisted one thousand affected households with initially training farmers and supporting the construction of a 100 livestock shelters along with distributing feed and drugs for some 30,000 small and large ruminants. The farmers were trained in cob construction, an earthquake resistant animal shelter technology that is a best practice in the earthquake affected districts of the NWFP and PAK. While in the medium to long-term, FAO plans to look into the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes and improve the management capacity of the farming community in agriculture, forestry and livestock sectors.

United States empowers farmers in Balochistan border areas

The Balochistan border area is largely inhabited by farmers and nomadic pastoralists dependent on rainfed agriculture and livestock grazing. Due to the harsh climatic conditions and resource constraints, the rural poor are among the poorest in the country. Consequent to that, there is an increased risk of food insecurity, migration to urban areas, severe overgrazing and deforestation. Further, the arid agriculture research and extension system in Balohistan has limited capacity to ameliorate the situation.

Livelihood strategies ensuing from the USAID funded project include new agriculture, rangeland and livestock technologies, and management practices that are keys to sustainable rainfed agriculture and rangeland production in Balohistan thereby increasing household incomes and alleviating poverty. Another ambitious goal is to increase women's access to economic resources. In order to achieve this target, Syed Mohammed Ali, Assistant FAO Representative, signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with Ms. Helen Loftin Regional Programme Manager for the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) to undertake a scoping study on the potentials for women's economic empowerment in the project focused districts.

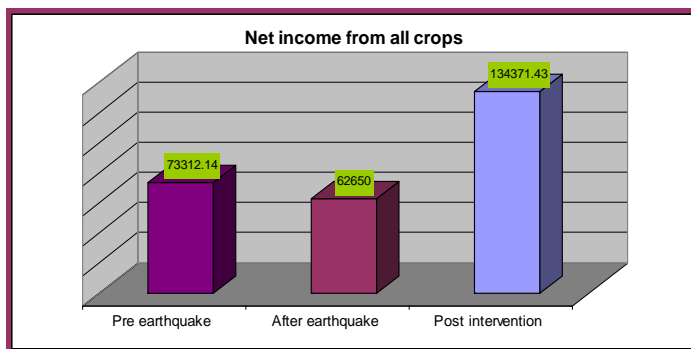


Syed Mohammad Ali, Assistant Representative FAO handing over the signed agreement to Ms Helen Loftin, Regional Manager MEDA Pakistan.

It was agreed that MEDA will interact with beneficiary communities, identify opportunities for developing the market for community produced hand-embroidered products, and develop a project proposal for a thirty-month period with an indicative budget in excess of one million US dollars. The project, *United States Assistance to Agriculture in Balochistan Border Areas*, is working in five districts of Balochistan - Zhob, Killa Saifullah, Loralai, Quetta and Mastung.

Water management makes more of less

Among the most basic resource for agriculture, water is quickly reaching its limits. The impact of reduced availability of water is especially severe among the rural poor who have the least access to this vital resource. Community-based Livelihoods Rehabilitation Project assisted in the rehabilitation of the irrigation channels. The purpose was to improve water conveyance efficiency and responsiveness to farmer irrigation requirements.



In order to evaluate the impact of the rehabilitated irrigation channels, FAO carried out an impact assessment survey of upper and lower Dherian irrigation channels in the earth-

quake affected Balakot tehsil of NWFP. Major findings of the survey was a discernable improvement in agricultural productivity of irrigated agriculture; an improvement in the economic returns per unit of land and water; an increase of irrigated area (20 kanals) and diversification of crops grown by farmers. In addition, the rehabilitation work has also resulted in the increase in length of the irrigation channel by 11%. However, the price escalation in crop inputs has adversely affected the overall profit margins of farmers and would have been more severe without the rehabilitation work.

The study employed three kinds of comparisons of differences in performance i) prior to the earthquake ii) after the earthquake but before the rehabilitation of the irrigation channels and iii) after the rehabilitation of the irrigation channels. Study methodology included a sample size of twenty for both sites in which fifteen were direct and five indirect beneficiaries.

Mushroom cultivation: Empowering women

Mushroom growing is one agricultural activity in which women can play a vital role without sacrificing their household responsibilities. Mushroom cultivation is simple, low cost, and suitable for rural areas, is labour intensive, provides employment in both the semi-urban and rural areas, and does not change the cropping pattern.

Mushroom cultivation has recently been introduced in Danna, district Muzaffarabad and thirty-five women have been trained. Twenty-five of them showed an interest in growing mushrooms and were provided post-training assistance in technical matters along with the procurement of necessary inputs. A close liaison is maintained with the beneficiaries for assisting in commercial production and marketing. FAO is supporting the AJK Community Development Programme sponsored by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Crop residues and grasses produced in an agro-based economy can be used in mushroom production. Wheat straw and grasses are the most commonly used substrates to grow mushrooms, needing a small space of farmers' own house. Mushroom not only has nutritive value as a food source but its cultivation also generates higher incomes within a short time period. Mushroom cultivation is expected to improve the socioeconomic condition of farmers, families and solve employment problems of both literate and illiterate, especially women.



Training, awareness raising, sterilization of substrate and compost preparation for mushroom cultivation in Danna, Muzaffarabad.

FAO works with farmers in their fields and policy makers in their ministries. The Organization has a strong comparative advantage and a wealth of accumulated knowledge and experience to respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century marked by increased urbanization and corresponding pressure on land and water resources; greater demand for food quality and security; climate change and the erosion of biodiversity; forest loss and overfishing; transboundary pests, plant and animal diseases and natural and human-induced disasters.



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