

EVALUATION REPORT

PROJECT TITLE:

Rehabilitation of Agricultural Subsistence and Disaster-Preparedness in Communities affected by Earthquake in the Districts of Shangla and Kohistan in North West Frontier Province, Pakistan

PROJECT NUMBER:

PAK 1009 / PAK 1011

PROJECT HOLDER:

DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE (DWHH)
GERMAN AGRO ACTION (GAA)

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

SARHAD RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (SRSP)
SOCIETY FOR HUMAN AND NATURAL RESOURCE (LASOONA)

Evaluator:

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1. Summary

The project entitled “Agricultural livelihood rehabilitation” was initiated by DWHH/GAA (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe /German Agro Action) in 10 selected Union Councils of the Shangla and Kohistan Districts, in North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan, which had been severely affected by the 2005 earthquake. Shangla and Kohistan are ranked as the least developed and the most deprived Districts of the Province with respect to economy and political representation.

Kommentar [AM1]: When did the project begin?

The sponsoring of project PAK 1009 is shared between DWHH/GAA and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), while PAK 1011, as an additional measure, is being implemented with DWHH/GAA funds. The four main working components of the project comprises of: 1.) Building Social Capacity; 2.) Rehabilitation and improvement of community infrastructure; 3.) Improvement of agricultural production; 3.) Improvement of livestock.

1.1 Project holder analysis

The management of PAK 1009 / PAK 1011 is in the hands of the project holder, DWHH / GAA, while the in-field implementation is through two project partners, LASOONA (Society for Human and Natural Resource Development) and SRSP (Sarhad Rural Support Programme). In order to formally define requirements, tasks and responsibilities, bi-lateral contracts (“agreement of allocation”) have been signed between GAA, LASOONA and SRSP, respectively. So far, there is no clearly defined mandate with regard to the involvement of these partners in the overall steering of the project, which in the future could be considered as an important, opportune and interesting approach to build up and strengthen the respective skills and capacities of these national NGO’s.

The employment of DWHH / GAA project staff, with regard to job-descriptions and staffing levels, has been carried out according to plan. Upcoming fluctuation problems could be solved immediately, thus preventing discontinuity related problems.

Kommentar [AM2]: It isn't clear what these problems are / will be

The project is characterized by a considerably high overhead-cost, which is partly due to the existence of three different work teams, and the relatively high number of employed personnel.

On the part of the implementing partners, the employment of staff does not follow a comprehensible and clearly concerted planning guideline. Employed staffers are in large part very young professionals, with limited practical field-experience. In this regard it is recommended to seek active participation of DWHH / GAA personnel in the selection and recruitment process of LASOONA and SRSP field staff.

Field staff of the implementing partners LASOONA and SRSP was found to have limited expertise in areas such as innovative working methods, new technical approaches, and overall management skills. It is therefore recommended to design and carry out a systematic programme for staff training and capacity building, for which effective use of the foreseen short-term assignments of external (national and international) specialists should be sought.

Apart from the employment of full-time staff, the project planning proposes the short-term assignment of an external specialist for conceptualization, preparation and implementation of a comprehensive agricultural and horticultural training programme. It is recommended to envisage the most immediate and fruitful use of this resource.

According to plan, the corresponding budget items have been used to purchase all necessary equipment and materials (vehicles, office furniture, PC's, telephone, copier, kitchenware, etc.). It can be stated that the current equipment is completely in line with overall requirements of project staff, allowing an efficient and effective realization of field activities and administrative tasks.

1.2 Analysis of situation and target group

Overall political, social, economic and agro-ecological framework conditions have not altered significantly during the ongoing period of project implementation; thus the preconditions and assumptions held true, and the course of the project implementation was unaffected.

By now, the project has succeeded in implementing its activities in nine of the selected Union Councils of Shangla and Kohistan, comprising a total number of 16.354 rural households (HH).

The number of farmer families benefited through the different aid-distribution activities could be considered as satisfactory. When confronted with the total number of target villages and needy farmer households, the number of trained farmers is far too low to produce a significant development effect.

Existing and newly formed CBOs were involved in the selection of target households for the distribution of wheat and maize seed, basic fertilizer and agriculture tools. In order to guarantee the hand-over of the limited number of aid-commodities to the neediest rural households, specific criteria were developed and communicated to the participating CBOs.

1.3 Analysis and assessment of project preparation

Before initiation of the project, a participatory baseline survey was conducted in 17 selected villages of Shangla and Kohistan. The survey describes an overall view of local problems and priorities in development, thus ensuring the formulation of a needs-based approach. However, the survey did not provide for an analysis and description of gender related issues (situation of female headed households) and information relative to performance of local farming systems.

1.4 Analysis and assessment of planning / project planning matrix

Most of the outlined "development-indicators" are formulated as quantitative target figures to orientate the respective project activities; without giving further detail on the possible and potential use of the produced outputs, or its contribution to the intended development impact. Furthermore, the majority of the development-indicators are not sufficiently precise with regard to criteria like participants (real figures), quality of impact, quantity, timeframe, and place.

1.5 Analysis and assessment of project implementation

The project has successfully started the implementation of activities in 9 Union Councils of Shangla and Kohistan, and in organizing or revitalizing Community Based Organizations in 80 of the 125 target villages. By now, 11,5 % of the local village population is listed as “direct” CBO members. According to project conception and approach, each of these members is supposed to represent and defend the interests of various neighbours and relatives. However, due to the informality of this organizational setting, an exact figure with regard to the number of “indirect” CBO members and beneficiaries can hardly be produced. Furthermore, no information can be given on the extent to which this percentage is composed of most affected and needy families.

The necessary training of CBO members has been carried out, although in very limited scale. It is recommended that these training activities should be implemented in a more systematic and intensive manner, combined with specific capacity-building components related to conflict management.

No direct involvement of rural women in the social-mobilisation process has been achieved so far, due to the specific cultural and religious conditions of the working area. It is recommended to outline and pursue a careful, long-term approach.

Local irrigation water use is based on traditional norms and regulations, and conflicts arising from water use are mostly mediated and solved by traditional ways and methods (jirga, intervention of village elders). Thus, no need can be seen to further prioritize the initially proposed build-up of “modern” and formal Water User Associations (WUA) and the participatory planning and drafting of new water use plans. Existing water use plans should be well documented and then handled as an integral part of irrigation-schemes planning procedures.

The rehabilitation and improvement of earthquake-damaged irrigation schemes is being carried out according to plan. Up to now, irrigation facilities for the cultivation of approximately 33 ha have been rehabilitated and improved, giving a direct benefit to 456 households. There can be no doubt that these small-scale irrigation schemes will be of the utmost relevance to increasing agricultural productivity and production. The average cost per hectare of irrigated land (1.408 Euros) seems to be relatively high, considering the fact that “only” rehabilitation of already existing channels has been done. It is recommended to revise and verify the outlined information, especially with regard to the irrigated area and number of direct and indirect beneficiaries. The design and technical quality of the constructed irrigation systems is according to local needs and conditions.

Under PAK 1011, the rehabilitation and improvement of 36 additional schemes is under way and may be concluded within the foreseen project period. In order to speed up the rehabilitation and improvement of irrigation systems, it is recommended to intensify the social mobilisation process and to simplify and locally adapt the overall procurement procedures.

Up to now, 2 rooftop water collection systems have been completed, and 14 more systems are in the making, as additional activities of PAK 1011. Considering the

scarcity of skilled labour, as necessary for the implementation of these systems, it is recommended to design and apply a strategy for strengthening local capacity.

The achieved progress with regard to the envisaged erosion-protection of 50 ha arable land, up to now is far from being satisfactory (2 ha). The construction of terraces and protection walls had to be done according to the standards of the national Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority (ERRA), and consequently shows a very sophisticated and material-intensive design, which is not very likely to be replicated by local farmer households and/or communities.

The successfully achieved rehabilitation and improvement of approximately 7 km pasture tracks and 3,5 km jeep-able roads are in line with the foreseen target-figures. The further rehabilitation of up to 91 km pasture tracks is under way with PAK 1011. There can be no doubt that the road and track infrastructure so far constructed and still planned will be of utmost importance to improve accessibility to some remote villages, and to facilitate the transport of marketable goods.

Up to now, no progress has been achieved with regard to the foreseen establishment of 2 demonstration plots, which were supposed to serve as a means of training for the introduction of "Sloping Agricultural Land Technology" (SALT). It is highly recommended that DWHH/GAA should prepare more information on the conceptual approach of SALT, and carry out specific training for LASOONA and SRSP field staff.

The distribution of maize seed and basic fertilizers has been carried out according to plan, giving a direct benefit to 1,024 households, thereby enabling them to replace their lost seed base, improve productivity, and cultivate additional areas. However, the distribution of high-quality seeds will only produce a medium-term effect and sustained development-impact, if a thorough build-up of awareness and technical skills on the part of benefited farmers can be achieved. In this context it is recommended that the foreseen training activities should be carried out in a systematic, intensive and timely manner.

The distribution of agricultural tools, achieved through the project, has responded to the urgent demand of 1,936 earthquake affected local households, and then facilitated the rehabilitation of destroyed houses and the necessary cultivation of fields.

In order to enhance local growing of fruit, the project helped in the establishment of 116 small orchards, (approximately 20 has), instead of the initially foreseen 20 medium-size orchards, thus covering a larger number of small / subsistence level farmers. So far, specific training of orchard farmers has been a weak point, and therefore it is recommended that all benefited and interested farmers should be educated / oriented about all technical aspects of orchard management.

As a means of training farmers in practical aspects related to field crops, horticulture and fruit growing, the project has successfully established 23 demo-plots (instead of the 10 foreseen plots); however, due to the high number and wide distribution of demo-plots and the restricted presence of field staff, adequate coverage and follow up of these demonstration sites is hampered.

So far, 15 field days and demonstration activities were held in order to impart aspects related to the management of demo-plots. Bearing in mind the total number and the remoteness of attended villages, the effect of this demo-activity achieved so far could be considered as relatively low. Consequent efforts should be undertaken to widen the focus and potential result of this activity. To do this, the visit schedule to demo-plots should be intensified, and the number of demonstration activities and training events significantly increased, prioritizing on-farm training activities

A market survey, as provided for in PAK 1001, is currently in progress. The hand-over of the final document is expected to take place in July 2007. It is suggested that project staff should press for an punctual submission of the report. Furthermore, it is recommended that DWHH / GAA personnel seek the active involvement of implementing partners in the revision and approbation process of this important survey.

Up to now, no activities of the foreseen training in agricultural and horticultural diversification and marketing / income generation have been carried out. Furthermore, no consistent and comprehensive training plan has been outlined or agreed with the implementing partners. Given the lack of internal expertise relative to the conceptualization, preparation and implementation of a comprehensive agricultural and horticultural training programme, it is recommended to put the foreseen external consultancy in place as immediately and effectively as possible.

In the course of the project, a total number of 1,184 sheep and 2,650 poultry units (3 female, 1 male chicken) were distributed to earthquake-affected families, handing over 1 sheep or 1 poultry unit to each of the identified beneficiary households. No clear information could be obtained with regard to the specific benefit given to rural women, as women's names were omitted from beneficiary lists, or simply replaced by the names of male relatives. In spite of this problem there can be no doubt that the distributed poultry units are already instrumental for the improvement of family nutrition (eggs) and income generation (sale of chicken).

According to plan, a vaccination campaign was successfully launched in Shangla and Kohistan district, benefiting 4,517 rural households with the treatment of 82,381 animals. However, as long as there is no long-term oriented follow-up strategy, this activity is not very likely to be continued by the target population in a self-sustained and comprehensive manner. In this context, a much more intensive training of local Livestock Extension Workers is paramount, as well as the realisation of specific measures to raise the awareness and self-help capacity of local livestock owners.

In the course of the project, mineral food supplements and licking blocks were handed over to the target group. Although there is no doubt that this project measure is producing an immediate and short-term effect on the improvement of animal health and performance, this activity has no potential to produce any sustained impact.

Planning provides for the improvement of cattle breeds through artificial insemination, without mentioning any technical data to sustain the technical and organizational feasibility of this component. Considering the lack of technical expertise, the high risk of infection, and the very reserved position of communities, it would have been advisable to remove this activity from project mandate. However, as the necessary equipment and materials already have been made available, it is recommended that

project staff should undertake all possible efforts towards a successful implementation of this component.

Project planning foresees the training and involvement in vaccination activities of 150 Livestock Extension Workers. In this regard, 32 farmers participated in a one-week training event, which by now enables them to attend minor cases of animal disease in their home-communities. Considering the total amount of target villages and beneficiary households, the number of trained LEW's is far to low to produce any real impact; it is recommended that DWHH/GAA and implementing partners undertake a joint effort to reach a rectification and refinement of this specific training programme (i.e. refresher courses; intensification of training; increase number of trainees; focus on in-field training and village-level events; design a follow-up strategy).

1.6 Assessment of development impacts

In general terms it can be stated that the methods and instruments used by the project are showing preliminary results with regard to a social mobilisation process within the target villages. The existing CBOs already were instrumental in the identification of needs at village level, conduction of social and technical feasibilities of proposed schemes, and the mobilization of community members in order to elicit commitment with regard to their contributions in the construction of infrastructures.

The rehabilitation and improvement of small-scale irrigation systems so far accomplished and still planned play an important role in poverty eradication, given the fact that even a tiny irrigated plot significantly adds to the range of options available in the livelihood strategies of local families.

The distribution of maize seed and basic fertilizers to needy families is proving to be an appropriate measure for the fast replacement of the lost seed base, immediate improvement of productivity, and the cultivation of additional areas, thus guaranteeing food security and additional agricultural income. Although on a relatively limited scale, the establishment of small orchards and the related training of farmers may produce positive results with regard to the improved and balanced nutrition of beneficiary households.

The distribution of sheep and poultry units is proving to be a helpful measure to ensure the fast replacement of lost livestock, thus restoring and improving the foundations of local animal husbandry. It can be ascertained that the distributed poultry units are already instrumental for the improvement of family nutrition (eggs and meat) and income generation (sale of chicken). Although in a still very limited extent, the training of local Livestock Extension Workers is helping to boost local knowledge and self-help capacities

1.7 Project management

Due to the geographical distance between the project office in Mansehra and the implementing sites in Shangla and Kohistan, day to day management and steering of the project shows a reduced effectiveness, and unfavourable efficiency parameters.

So far, there is no well-defined mandate with regard to the involvement of LASOONA and SRSP in the overall steering of the project which might be an important,

interesting and opportune approach to build and strengthen the respective skills and capacities of these national NGOs.

1.8 Recommendations

DWHH/GAA is recommended to continue support of PAK 1009/1011 to the end of the period agreed, without modification of the main objectives. However, considering the given shortness of time, clear emphasis should be given to the further consolidation of organized CBOs and the timely completion of rural infrastructures.

Furthermore, it is recommended to seek for a continuation of funding in the framework of a second project phase, with duration of at least 2 years, in order to consolidate the initiated process of livelihood development in some of the poorest areas and villages of Pakistan. A possible continuation of project activities should prioritize on the following components:

- Further build-up and organizational strengthening of Community Based Organizations
- Construction and enlargement of small-scale irrigation systems, and carrying out of the respective training of benefited farmers in all issues related to effective and efficient water-use.
- Improvement of forage husbandry (production, use and storage of animal fodder), as a means for improvement of animal husbandry.

Furthermore, it is recommended to carry out a preliminary analysis in order to clarify whether and under which terms the cooperation with the current implementing partners will be continued, or if there is any perspective for a more direct involvement of DWHH/GAA staff in the implementation of field activities.