Over 10,000 poultry birds distributed in Balochistan

GRASP project distributed 10500 poultry birds to rural women in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Livestock and Dairy Department, Government of Balochistan. These distributions engage women in agricultural production, encourage poultry entrepreneurship, and enable them to tap into economic opportunities. The project is working in Nushki and Kharan districts to provide immediate relief as part of the COVID-19 emergency work plan.

The poultry sector generates employment and income for about 1.5 million people in the country (National Bank of Pakistan). Its contribution in agriculture growth is 4.81 percent and in Livestock growth 9.84 percent. Poultry meat contributes 19 percent of the total meat production in the country, and the raising prices of red meat mean the demand for poultry is increasing. With limited options for home based businesses particularly for women in Balochistan, coupled with the closure of markets due to lockdown, the economic situation has declined for many households. With agriculture and livestock dominating the economy of the province for most part, poultry businesses is easy to manage, and lucrative for operating out of homes.

Amna, one of the recipients of the poultry package feels that she can now make a monetary contribution to running the household, which has been facing tough times. “This timely intervention will certainly help us to support our families, as majority of the men in our village are daily wage laborers, and when COVID-19 outbreak led to partial lockdowns, there were times when they did not earn for more than a week. The poultry will help me contribute to our household income”.

The project delivered healthy, vaccinated poultry to two thousands households in the region. Measures were taken for recovery from journey stress, and for acclimatization with changed climate; the birds were given 14 days quarantine rest, and watered at government poultry farm before delivery.

This particular intervention of poultry distribution is an integral part of Integrated Household Food System (IHFS) intervention, which includes kitchen gardening, homestead poultry production and homestead dairy production, and is designed for pregnant and lactating women. Under this intervention, GRASP has also trained 2,286 women on kitchen gardening in Nushki and Kharan. The homestead poultry business of these women will make a substantial contribution to household food security.
Stories from the field

Piyari and her husband Ganga Ram from village Long Faqeer in Sindh grow crops and rear livestock for a living. They used to purchase agriculture inputs on credit from sellers in their village. COVID-19 led to most of them closing shop, and Piyari and Ganga were left with no seeds. Their crop growth shrunk and the money became tight. The couple received livestock rearing training and seeds from GRASP intervention in their village through Research and Development Foundation (RDF). The training and distribution of inputs, coupled with the reopening of markets has brought better days for the couple. Piyari and Ganga Ram have started earning money again through their crops, their cows have started milking again after being given proper feed. Piyari believes these tough times have prepared her, and according to the training, she is planning ahead and already saving seeds for the next season.

GRASP is training rural communities on skills and expertise that will generate income for them in the future. Trainings on value addition and livestock health and nutrition have been ongoing in identified districts across Sindh, and in addition to these, COVID-19 SOP’s, social distancing, and safe business conduct have been included as part of the curriculum. In January, nine awareness sessions and a five-day session on Animal Health and Nutrition was carried out with Livestock farmers, through which affected families learned new technical skills and increased their productivity through opting best practices. Thirty women were trained in this session.

‘The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on our livestock and our lives” says Fehmida from village Sonu Shaikh, Sindh. Her livestock had lost weight and stopped giving milk due to the unavailability of fodder and other inputs in the market. However, after receiving WANDA (cattle feed) and training from GRASP, she started making balanced fodder and immediately noticed an improvement in her cow’s skin and weight, “I am milking my cows after a long time!”

Training of Trainer sessions have been ongoing in January across Sindh, on Animal Health and Nutrition, and Value Added Items around milk in Hyderabad, Thatta, and Khairpur. This is the first time for many females to be getting any form of formal education for properly rearing livestock. In addition, five training of trainer sessions were conducted in Thatta, Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, Khairpur, and Tharparkar, where 65 male and female participants made business plans, conducted market surveys, and were introduced to marketing strategies for selling their produce.

Exposure visit on olives to Chakwal and Peshawar

GRASP team has been visiting olive farms across Balochistan to study farming practices and identifying the needs of the farmers to expand their enterprises into lucrative ventures. In this regards an olive exposure visit was organized in which farmers, researchers, business association representatives, olive processors and agriculture department representatives from Balochistan visited Barani Agriculture Institute (BARI) in Chakwal and Agriculture Research Institute (ARI) in Peshawar. Thirteen participants from Nushki, Khuzdar, Zhob and Musakhel districts learned latest technologies and innovations in olive farming. This visit was part of the work GRASP is doing to ensure steady progress in tapping the olive market.
Many farmers in attendance were introduced to innovations pivotal to their growth in the sector, for the first time. With the changing climate patterns, and already scarce water resources in Balochistan, olives are a sustainable farming option. Able to resist high temperatures and low water need, olive leaves make for excellent fodder for livestock, and multiple by-products such as oils, teas, and medicine.

**Awareness Campaign**

The project is working in identified districts of Sindh and Balochistan to provide relief to small and medium enterprises as part of the COVID-19 emergency work plan.

- GRASP has been raising awareness of SMEs in Sindh on applying for government financing schemes and policies such as the PM Ehsaas Programme and SBP Refinancing scheme for payment of wages. In January, six information sessions were conducted in six villages of Thatta on Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program to support affected families. Ninety-eight females attended the sessions, where they were informed of the eligibility criteria for applying for the loan, markup and return back loan system, maximum range for getting loans, and the names of banks for availing loan facility.

- Capacity building sessions on safe market functioning during COVID-19 were conducted in Thatta and Khairpur. Twenty-two participants attended the sessions from market committees and relevant line departments.

- Thirty waste bins were installed in Karachi, Thatta, and Khairpur through market committees of vegetable and livestock markets. Prior to this, GRASP provided and installed six hand-washing stations in markets.

**News in brief**

To date, GRASP has successfully vaccinated over 40,000 animals, while training livestock farmers on better practices when rearing animals in Sindh and Balochistan. The vaccinations coupled with training on feedlot fattening and livestock nutrition have been building capacities of farmers and SMEs.

Development of agri-entrepreneurship is one of the key mandates of GRASP. To foster collaboration with key actors such as the National Incubation Center, SME Advisors visited NIC Islamabad to discuss agri-entrepreneurship in Pakistan, particularly Sindh & Balochistan. The team presented the entrepreneurship ecosystem mapping exercise to NIC team.

Five Enterprise Development trainings for Agribusiness Support Providers (ABS) were held across Sindh and were attended by 65 participants.

SME Advisor GRASP had meeting with Director Soil and water testing to discuss soil testing and soil fertility mapping.

Sindh team meeting with Secretary Commerce and Industries Mr. Riaz Qureshi to identify areas of partnership and collaboration.
Our partners

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

• FAO under GRASP project is implementing Integrated Household Food Systems (IHFSs) program in district Kharan, Nushki. The beneficiaries are also being given vegetable seeds, poultry, high efficiency irrigation systems, solar dryers, and plastic tunnels, along with the nutrition resource materials. About 2,720 women beneficiaries have attended the trainings, farmer field school sessions in 136 IHFS model kitchen garden in these two districts.

• An impact assessment survey is being conducted to assess the learnings from these FFS sessions in targeted communities. An essential aspect of this survey is adoption of MELA approach, i.e. Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Adaptation (MELA), which is an effective tool to identify the impact of interventions and op-portunities for continuous improvement and up-scaling.

• The survey will be conducted within 200 households to assess the food and nutrition literacy among women, including specific food choices and dietary behaviors and to assess knowlge and risk precentage of poor dietry diversity on mother and child health.

• Livestock Management Sessions were held in Thatta and Khairpur Mirs under the GRASP Project, attended by 191 participants.

• FAO in Sindh conducted awareness session on complaint response mechanism for the project beneficiaries. A landline telephone number and email for addressing complaints have been shared with the beneficiaries in Thirty-six villages of the target districts.

• FAO Representative in Pakistan, Ms. Rebekah Bell visited Sindh and met with GRASP Project team for the progress and planning. The mission visited field areas regarding value chain addition of Tomato production as well as Tomato market in Mirpur sakro District Thatta. The FAOR also met with livestock owners who recently vaccinated their livestock of PPR and Deworming vaccination under the GRASP project.

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF)

• PAF submitted the final inception deliverables and report to ITC. The recruitment process for the implementation phase is ongoing.

Upcoming events:

• GRASP National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) has been rescheduled, and the new date will be communicated to partners via official channels.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission

Contact us:
Aliyya_noor@intracen.org
Communication Specialist

ITC - GRASP
CO-United Nations (UNMOGIP) - HQ,
PO Box 1350, 5-11 diplomatic enclave, G-5, Islamabad

Join our Facebook group to stay updated on project activities and milestones, at https://www.facebook.com/groups/1097343917347186 and our official web page at https://www.intracen.org/GRASP/