

Livelihoods Case Study

RESTORING LIVELIHOODS AFTER A DISASTER: FLOODS IN PAKISTAN

COUNTRY: Pakistan

THEMES: Disaster; Village Development Committees

BACKGROUND

In 2010, devastating floods throughout the Sindh Province in Pakistan affected 18 million people. Heavy monsoon rains in 2011 caused a second flood, decimating any recovery from the 2010 floods. In 2012, Tearfund began to work with 65 village communities in the UC Sheikh Bhirkio area. The Food Security and Livelihoods project was established to help alleviate poverty, provide sustainable livelihoods and aid recovery following the flooding. In each village, village development committees (VDCs) were established to help identify community needs and vulnerable individuals, and VDCs were used to maintain ownership of each project. Several projects were set up and run based on the needs of each village.

THE PROJECT

Entrepreneurship

With the help of the VDCs, 94 beneficiaries were identified who were willing to participate and had a sound knowledge of small businesses as an alternative source of livelihoods but could not afford to invest in their own.

Some 41 beneficiaries in 2012, and 53 in 2013, received a one-day training session covering small businesses skills, eg marketing, negotiation skills and record keeping. Each beneficiary received 20,000 PKR (approximately \$200) in two instalments. The second instalment could be received once field staff verified that the first had been properly used or invested in their proposed schemes. Businesses established so far include utensils sellers, donkey carts, electricians, ladies' tailors and flour mills, amongst others.

Beneficiaries are now very happy to have their own businesses, and are already earning around PKR 5,000 each month. They are now re-investing their money and expanding their businesses. The businesses established also allow villagers to purchase basic items from the village.

Goat distribution

In rural areas, rearing livestock is the largest source of income, accounting for about half the GDP. Livestock provide status, important nutrients (milk and meat) and cash returns for milk or trading animals. Beneficiaries were selected based on their wellbeing and poverty status with the help of the VDC. Tearfund provided these vulnerable families with vaccinated goats in order to increase milk and meat production and develop small livestock farms in Pakistan. This provides a source of both nutritious food and income for vulnerable families.

One beneficiary said: ‘Soon we will be having milk in our home and our children and family will be getting a balanced nutritional diet. I want to thank to Tearfund for their support that we have goats with us. It is a great support for our livelihood and the survival of our kids in the future.’

Training on livestock and plants, and equipment provisions

Community training in livestock management (covering breeds, feed, health and hygiene of livestock) and plant management (covering modes of transplantation, water, supervision of transplanted plants and conservation of environments) were given via a video documentary to villages. The training aimed to enhance the quality and quantity of products, improve the knowledge and skills of the community, and reduce poverty through the resulting increased income. Some 27 livestock trainings (reaching 1,969 people) and 15 plant trainings (reaching 1,791 people) were conducted. Additionally, farming toolkits were given to farmers as per their need. Many had lost all their equipment in the flood. By providing kits it was expected that the output of farms would improve in a shorter time-frame. In many communities, traditional methods of food storage provide no effective protection against losses by weevils, pests, rats and other rodents. Tearfund provided 125 grain storage structures in 20 rural communities. These metal cylinders can hold 800 to 1,000kg of food grains, which can feed communities throughout the year, as well as saving money by reducing losses.

One beneficiary said: ‘Tearfund gave us good quality wheat seed and fertilizer for two acres cultivation... From that crop I got 110 mounds (4,400kg) from two acres, out of which I gave 70 mounds (2,800kg) to other farmers in the village to cultivate next year.’

Cash-for-work

The cash-for-work scheme aimed to restore flood-damaged infrastructure, such as roads, irrigation channels, community buildings etc. Since many families had to choose between eating and repairing their houses, the cash-for-work scheme enabled beneficiaries to repair flood damage while covering their daily costs (food, medicine etc.). By repairing or improving infrastructure, such as roads and irrigation systems, village income can increase as a result of agriculture or improved access to other villages. Many villagers used their wages to buy income-generating assets, such as goats or shops, resulting in not only flood repairs but a means of long-term income.

One beneficiary said: ‘The day I got the money I decided to open a small shop... I am happy to say that I am earning 500 to 600 rupees a day for my survival. I am thankful to Tearfund that they provided me a platform to establish a business set up for me and my family.’

Tree plantations

Disasters can contribute to ecosystem degradation and loss, such as soil erosion and salinisation, and biodiversity loss. Trees planted will eventually provide sources of food (from fruit), timber, as well as shade, shelter and protection from soil erosion. Some 50 000 trees, such as mango and lemon, which produce edible fruit, or neem, which produce natural pesticides, were planted.

Bicycles

Providing bicycles reduces the time it takes to get to work or the market, and therefore increases the time available for work or labour.

Women's skills development training centres

Women are particularly vulnerable to financial problems, especially in a male dominated society where women do not have control over resources. Training centres aim to support women by teaching them literacy, sewing and handicraft skills for three months, creating economic and social improvements. Training on sewing, cutting, sizing, stitching and knitting is given. These training sessions have provided empowerment and employment to women to give them a sustainable income for themselves, as well as awareness of other sources of livelihoods and social issues through daily interactions. Tearfund staff also encouraged women to use their existing skills as a form of livelihood, such as teaching to provide an education for children in the community.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES

- Some 97 percent of beneficiaries identified that a positive change had taken place in their lives as a result of the Tearfund or partner intervention.
- The Food Security and Livelihoods project has helped the development of self-sustaining communities, including women and marginal farmers contributing to income generation and resource mobilisation.
- Income generating activities that are appropriate for women has improved their wellbeing and self-sufficiency.
- By providing equipment and training, farm productivity has improved.
- Food security has improved in terms of availability and access to food, and nutritional intake has improved due to the availability of new foods such as goats' milk.
- A broader range of income generation options has been provided, such as goats, sewing and handicraft, especially for vulnerable families.
- Tree plantations have reduced the rate of land degradation and soil erosion, as well as providing a source of natural resources such as fruit and timber.
- Establishment of VDCs has helped communities to identify their needs and mobilised them to take action, while keeping ownership of the project.
- There has been a reduction in un-sustainable livelihoods, such as begging.