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Delivering Prosperity

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Women Parliamentarians Recognise PPAF's Role in Advancing Women's Empowerment

The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) hosted a high-level consultative session, "Accelerating Women's Rights and Empowerment," bringing together women parliamentarians, government representatives, and key stakeholders to discuss strategies for promoting gender equality and women economic empowerment.

During the session, PPAF CEO Nadir Gul briefed the parliamentarians on the organisation's role in breaking systemic barriers to women's economic participation. He highlighted how PPAF's initiatives—spanning access to finance, skills training, education, and enterprise development—are creating sustainable pathways for women to achieve financial independence and uplift their communities.

The session was attended by Ms. Wajiha Qamar, Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ms.Farah Naz Akbar, Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Dr. Shazia Sobia Soomro and Ms. Sehar Kamran, Members of the National Assembly, representatives from the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and NACTA. The participants showed keen interest in PPAF's efforts to promote inclusion while acknowledging the transformative impact these initiatives have had at the grassroots level.

As representatives of their constituencies, they expressed their commitment to supporting PPAF's initiatives, advocating for stronger partnerships to enhance the scale and impact of these efforts. Government representatives also reaffirmed their appreciation for PPAF's innovative, community-driven approach to poverty alleviation, reinforcing their willingness to collaborate in driving meaningful, long-term change.









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GRASP Launches 4th Cycle of Matching Grants in 22 districts



The European Union funded Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) programme has officially launched the 4th cycle of matching grants, further strengthening Pakistan's rural agribusiness ecosystem. This cycle introduces four grant sizes: PKR 2.5 million, PKR 5 million, PKR 10 million, and PKR 20 million, tailored to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Sindh and Balochistan.

GRASP has earmarked the PKR 2.5 million and PKR 5 million grants exclusively for women, minorities, and persons with special needs, ensuring that the marginalised entrepreneurs receive the financial backing they need to thrive. The larger grant categories remain open to all eligible SMEs.

With an ambitious target of disbursing more than PKR 412 million in the 4th cycle, GRASP continues to provide vital financial support to SMEs in 22 target districts, helping strengthen Pakistan's livestock and horticulture sectors and fostering sustainable rural development.

To date, GRASP has successfully awarded 371 matching grants worth more than PKR 847 million through its previous three cycles, fueling growth and resilience among agribusinesses across the country.

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Mapping Local Challenges in AJK and Gilgit Baltistan

To better understand local challenges and drive strategic planning, PPAF's partners have conducted rapid needs assessments under the Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Local Area Development Programmes.

Hamza Development Foundation assessed Union Council Badhal Shareef, District Haveli, and UC Sena Daman, District Hattian Bala, focusing on climate resilience, poverty alleviation, sustainable agriculture, and disaster risk reduction. Through group discussions and key informant interviews with community members, government officials, and disaster management authorities, the study identified pressing socio-economic needs. Additionally, 80 youths, including people with disabilities, were profiled to evaluate education levels, employment status, and skill development gaps.

Meanwhile, Hashoo Foundation carried out an assessment in UCs Guner Farm, Thaka Nayat, Thore Hudor, and Botogan/Khiner of Tehsil Chilas, District Diamer. Engaging approximately 12,000 households and community groups, the study explored access to essential services, livelihood opportunities, environmental resource management, and economic challenges. The process ensured cultural and geographical sensitivities were respected while maintaining close coordination with key stakeholders.

The findings from both assessments will help bridge policy gaps and guide targeted interventions in climate adaptation, infrastructure development, economic empowerment, and institutional capacity-building, ultimately promoting long-term resilience and sustainable growth in targeted communities of the programmes.













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Providing Access to Clean Drinking Water



The PPAF's funded Sustainable Development through Clean Drinking Water Supply Schemes project in Nowshera and Charsadda districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been successfully completed. Implemented in partnership with the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), this initiative has significantly improved access to clean drinking water in the area, providing the essential facility for easing the lives of underprivileged communities.

The initiative targeted Union Councils Gandheri and Kuz Behram Dheri in Charsadda and Dak Ismail Khel in Nowshera, has benefited approximately 985 households, ensuring safe drinking water for over 7,000 people. By enhancing sustainable social and economic infrastructure, it has strengthened local communities through inclusive decision-making and active participation.

To ensure long-term impact, 25 community institutions were established and trained, alongside capacity-building initiatives, including three community skills management trainings and two operation and maintenance (O&M) trainings. These efforts have equipped local communities with the skills to sustain and manage the water supply systems while also encouraging tree plantation and enhancing health outcomes, particularly for women and children.







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Building Community Resilience Through Emergency Response Teams

Given Pakistan's vulnerability to natural disasters, especially in remote areas with limited emergency services, strengthening local response mechanisms is essential. To enhance disaster preparedness, PPAF as part of its Restoring Social Services and Climate Resilience (RSS&CR) Project is enhancing disaster preparedness by establishing Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) in 61 Union Councils across 19 districts affected by the 2022 floods in Pakistan. These teams are receiving skills, and resources to ensure swift and effective emergency response, enabling them to carry out disaster awareness, evacuations, first aid, and post-disaster rehabilitation.

Comprising 15-20 trained volunteers—including youth, women, teachers, and healthcare professionals, represented by three Emergency Response Teams are being formed at the Union Council level to strengthen community preparedness and response capacity. So far, 95 ERTs have been established and trained, with a target of 186 teams across the project villages. PPAF's implementing partners, in collaboration with disaster management specialists and Rescue 1122, are training and equipping these teams with knowledge and skills for effective emergency response. To further enhance community resilience and ensure the availability of resources for emergency response, PPAF has provided emergency stockpiles to each project Union Council to enable timely and effective relief efforts during disasters.

As the Emergency Response Teams serve as the first line of defense in emergencies and play a crucial role in strengthening recovery efforts, PPAF collaborates with National and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (NDMA, PDMAs), local governments, and civil society organisations to integrate the teams into national disaster management frameworks.







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Workshop on LACIP-II Progress, Achievements and Challenges

As the KfW-funded Livelihood Support & Promotion of Small Community Infrastructure Programme (LACIP-II) nears two years of implementation, PPAF organised a one-day workshop, "Deliberations on Mid-Course Corrections", to review progress, highlight challenges, and refine strategies for improved project execution.

Held in Islamabad, the workshop gathered key stakeholders, including PPAF, its Partner Organisations (SRSP & SABAWON), and NEC – the project's monitoring . Discussions focused on overcoming security challenges, managing cost escalation, and ensuring quality infrastructure. Standard operating procedures to be followed in case of change in cost and scope were discussed, alongside strategies for strengthening community institutions through governance, participatory development planning, and establishing linkages.

The workshop explored new skill development areas including fruit processing, beekeeping, and kitchen gardening while highlighting women's economic inclusion through safe marketplaces like Parda Bazar. Partner organisations presented infrastructure progress, identifying challenges related to election timelines, procurement processes, and material availability
Mr. Ibad Ur Rahman (Environment Expert, World Bank) praised partners for working in challenging security environments, stressing the importance of climate action, compliance, and sustainability. Concluding the session, Mr. Arshad Rashid, Chief Programmes, PPAF reinforced the need for continued collaboration, transparency, and financial discipline. The workshop established a clear roadmap for timely completion and satisfactory achievement of project results.









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Italian Delegation Visits PPAF-Led Dairy Development Project in Toba Tek Singh



A delegation from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), led by Mr. Francesco Zata, Head of Office at AICS, and Mr. Imran Ashraf, Senior Consultant for Agriculture and Natural Resources, visited the Dairy Development Project (DDP) in Toba Tek Singh. Accompanied by members from the PPAF team, the delegation aimed to assess the project's impact, evaluate its success, and explore future investment opportunities in the dairy sector.

The Dairy Development Project, led by PPAF and implemented through its partner organisation, Farmers Development Organisation (FDO) was funded by Engro Foundation. The project resulted in enhanced dairy farming practices, strengthening rural livelihoods, and creating sustainable dairy value chains. During the visit, the delegation engaged with key stakeholders, including livestock recipients and extension workers, male and female farmers, micro-enterprise owners, and artificial insemination technicians, to gain insights into the project's outcomes. They also visited project sites and met dairy farmers who benefited from the initiative.

The delegation interacted with District Livestock Department officials to understand how the project's provision of crossbreed Frisian pregnant cows, quality fodder, and specialised training for livestock extension workers and farmers contributed to the sector's growth. They were particularly impressed by the emergence of small enterprises driven by increased milk production, demonstrating the project's lasting impact on household incomes and rural employment.





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Empowering Minds Through Literature and Knowledge

With its broader vision of empowering communities both economically and intellectually, PPAF has contributed to fostering a culture of book reading and knowledge sharing by supporting the 9th Gwadar Book Festival, organised by its implementing partner, Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) through the Rural Community Development Council (RCDC). The festival, themed around climate change solutions, provided a vibrant space for literary and artistic expression, witnessing record-breaking book sales exceeding PKR 2.8 million, with a significant portion dedicated to Balochi-language literature.

The event was inaugurated by Chairman PPAF Mohammad Tahseen, Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Hamood-ur-Rehman, Prof. Dr. Abdul Razzaq Sabir, and author Siddiq Baloch, alongside participation from renowned authors, poets, and artists. The four-day festival concluded with a grand ceremony, reflecting the region's deep appreciation for literature and learning.

Speakers at the event highlighted the transformative impact of books in shaping societies and emphasised intellectual enrichment as a crucial step toward overcoming the poverty of mind. Dignitaries, including MPA Gwadar Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman Baloch and other prominent figures, said that fostering reading habits is fundamental to nurturing critical thinking, awareness, and long-term societal growth. Recognising the significance of such initiatives, the speakers also encouraged their regular occurrence, noting that they not only inspire a love for reading but also lay the foundation for a more knowledgeable, engaged, and forward-thinking society.







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Stories From the Field

Success Knows No Bounds- Only Potential!

In Ranjho, a remote village of district Mirpurkhas (Sindh), Lachmi transformed her small-scale farming venture into a thriving agribusiness with support from the EU funded Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP). Limited resources and market access once held her back, but GRASP provided financial assistance, training, and market linkages that unlocked her potential.

She received a matching grant of PKR 0.5 million that was utilised to purchase three high-yield dairy cows and build a climate-resilient shed, boosting production while protecting livestock from extreme weather. Soon improved milk production and quality started giving higher profits, which had a positive impact on her family's living conditions as well. She also received training in financial literacy and effective business management skills that contributed to better business management, expanding the customer base and establishing a stable foothold in the local dairy market.

Lachmi's journey proves that with the right support, small entrepreneurs can break barriers and drive meaningful change. As she grows, she exemplifies the power of inclusive economic development, showing that when opportunities reach those who need them most, entire communities thrive.

GRASP is being implemented by International Trade Centre in partnership with Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, FAO and SMEDA. Thardeep Rural Development Programme is PPAF's partner organisation in Mirpur Khas.





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A New Start for Zaitoon Bibi

Zaitoon Bibi, a young woman from UC Yarik, District D.I. Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, grew up in a financially struggling household. Her father, a daily wager, was the sole breadwinner, and his limited income barely covered the family's basic needs, including food, healthcare, and education for her younger siblings. As the eldest daughter, Zaitoon wanted to support her family, but without a marketable skill, her opportunities were limited.

Her journey toward financial independence began through the KfW-funded Livelihood Support & Promotion of Small Community Infrastructure Programme (LACIP), led by PPAF and implemented by SABAWON. As part of the project's Livelihood Enhancement component, she received the opportunity to complete a three-month beautician course at a government-recognised institute.

Upon completion, she earned certification and a professional toolkit, equipping her to start her own business.

With her newly acquired skills, Zaitoon set up a home-based beauty parlor, gradually building a loyal customer base within her community. Today, she earns a stable monthly income of PKR 25,000-30,000, allowing her to contribute to household expenses. Her brothers are now enrolled in school, and her mother can afford essential medication.

Beyond supporting her family, Zaitoon is now training other young girls, empowering them with skills for financial independence. Her journey is a testament to how access to skills training can transform lives, creating ripple effects of economic and social upliftment





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Stories From the Field

Yasmeen's Path to Financial Independence

Yasmeen Kousar, a 40-year-old mother of five from Mandi Yazman, District Bahawalpur, is a testament to resilience and determination. Struggling to manage household expenses and her children's education on her husband's modest income of PKR 12,000, she knew she had to take action to secure a better future for her family.

Determined to change her circumstances, Yasmeen visited the AGAHE Pakistan - a PPAF's partner organisation where she learned about the Prime Minister's Interest-Free Loan Programme funded by the Government of Pakistan. Within just five days of applying, she received an interest free loan of PKR 50,000, which she used to set up a small grocery store in her home. Her business took off, earning her PKR 10,000 per month.

Encouraged by her success, Yasmeen saw the potential to grow. She took additional interest free loans of PKR 50,000 each to expand her business, adding bangles, laces, and other items to attract more customers. With her growing inventory, her monthly income doubled to PKR 20,000.

Today, Yasmeen is not only financially independent but also a source of inspiration for women in her village. She has turned challenges into opportunities, proving that with the right support and determination, success is within reach.

PMIFL led by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund is being implemented by AGAHE-Pakistan in Bahawalpur.



