



Integrated Rural Food Security Project Sindh Province, Pakistan (2015-2017)



Midterm Evaluation

Waltraud Novak, January 2017



ABBREVIATIONS

BF	Beneficiary
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CG	Cash grant
CNIC	Pakistan National ID Card (Computerized National Identity Card)
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DM	Disaster Management
DMM	Disaster Management Manager
DPO	District Project Officer
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DS	District Secretary
ERT	Emergency Response Team
EW	Early warning
FO	Field Officer
FS	Food security
GRC	German Red Cross
HH	Household
IEC	Information, Education, Communication
IRFSP	Integrated Rural Food Security Project
KG	Kitchen garden
LBOD	Left Bank Outfall Drain
LCBO	Lead CBO, Lead Community Based Organisation
LH	Livelihood
NHQ	National Head Quarter
MTE	Midterm-Evaluation
PC	Project Coordinator
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PHQ	Provincial Head Quarter
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
PM	Project Manager
PMER	Planning Monitoring Evaluation Reporting
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRC	Pakistan Red Crescent
PS	Provincial Secretary
SAU	Sindh Agricultural University
ToT	Training of Trainers
UC	Union Council (administrative unit, consisting of about 100-150 villages)

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This evaluation has been conducted according to the IFRC Evaluation Guidelines, and in particular taking into account and trying to respect to a maximum its *Evaluation Standards*: Utility, Feasibility, Ethics & Legality, Impartiality & Independence, Transparency, Accuracy, Participation and Collaboration.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2010, the Province of Sindh in the South of Pakistan has been hit repeatedly by floods. The districts Thatta and Badin, located at the coastal belt of Sindh, are specially prone to disasters and the already prevailing chronic food insecurity of the districts has been aggravated by the destruction of livelihoods by the floods. Already weak coping mechanisms of the affected communities are being reduced with the sequence of disasters year after year.

The Integrated Rural Food Security Project in Sindh (IRFSP) aims at the improvement of food security of rural communities in the south of Pakistan, as well as improved preparedness and resilience of communities to natural disasters and the effects of climate change. The project runs for 3 years (2015-2017) and works in 22 target communities in the two districts of Badin and Thatta in the Province of Sindh. It is planned to reach a total population of 11.900 persons through awareness raising activities, of which 700 vulnerable households benefit directly from the distribution of conditional cash grants. The project is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with € 600.000 under the “Eine Welt ohne Hunger” Sonderinitiative (SEWOH). Additional funds are contributed by German Red Cross (GRC) to complement for HR costs. The project is implemented through Pakistan Red Crescent (PRC) Sindh.

In January 2017, a midterm evaluation (MTE) for the IRFSP has been carried out to examine the current progress achieved towards the stated objectives, as well as to identify shortcomings and best practices so far, and the learnings that can be drawn from them in order to feed back into the implementation in the remaining project period. The evaluation questions, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, were based upon the DAC criteria Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Impact, Coherence, Coordination and Implementation. The additional point of Planning/Design was included in the findings by the evaluator.

Main findings and lessons learnt:

- ⇒ The IRFSP is a **pioneer project** for GRC/PRC in the area of food security (FS) and livelihood (LH), and shows to render successful results. The approach should be extended and replicated in other villages beyond the project period. GRC/PRC to strengthen FS/LH capacity within the organisations.
- ⇒ The **integration of LH activities into disaster risk reduction projects** (DRR) appears to be a convenient approach to strengthen communities to be more resilient against disasters, while on the other side, the mainstreaming of DRR activities in the LH component (tree planting, agricultural trainings etc.) helps to build awareness and at the same time stimulates practical activities.
- ⇒ The **distribution of conditional cash grants** is as a suitable tool to bring middle-term improvements for income generation and to create change within 1-3 years. On one hand the beneficiaries had the freedom to choose the type of income diversification according to their interests, on the other hand the conditions for the grant lead to improved resilience against climate change and to enhanced food security for the beneficiaries.
- ⇒ **Relevance:** The project is highly relevant to the beneficiaries and addressing the needs in a disaster prone area with high food insecurity. The diversification of income sources is a relevant need of the beneficiaries; however, other big concerns for villagers are water availability, access to health care services and education. The activities carried out are consistent with the overall goal of the project.
- ⇒ **Effectiveness:** At the moment of the MTE all the indicators are on track and the objectives are likely to be achieved by the end of the project period. Gender aspects are reasonably mainstreamed along the project line.

- ⇒ **Efficiency:** The use of donor funds for this project is considered efficient.
 - The process for beneficiary selection is complex but necessary for a coherent, impartial selection.
 - The cooperation with Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) for the delivery of trainings is deemed very successful.
 - Some internal processes and structures appear to show inefficiencies resulting in discontentment on different levels (financial approval, reporting), and should be discussed amongst the project team. Project coordination structure shows some duplications and should be revised.
- ⇒ **Sustainability:** Ownership of the activities is high amongst the villagers and also amongst Community Based Organisations (CBO), which is an important precondition for the sustainability of the project. Linkages with government structures still have to be intensified. To include Livelihood activities in DRR projects appears to be a convenient approach to strengthen communities to be more resilient against disasters. With its approach of combining conditional cash grant and DRR/CCA (Climate Change Adaption) awareness raising activities, the project managed to bring together practise and knowledge, which increases the chances of good sustainability of the activities. An exit strategy for the last year of implementation has been defined by the project team during the evaluation workshop.
- ⇒ **Impact:** Behaviour change and establishment of new technologies takes time, but with the help of conditional cash grant, observable effects have been generated. Remarkable empowerment and ownership can be seen in the communities, awareness about the project goals is high. The evaluation did not find any negative effects or conflicts caused by the intervention. However, not all most vulnerable people are included for the cash grant distribution, which could lead to possible conflicts.
- ⇒ **Coherence:** The project is in-line with and well embedded in different government policies; integration of livelihood activities in DRR projects is seen as important by PRC.
- ⇒ **Coordination:** Coordination has clearly been identified as an area for improvement, and district wide coordination forums have been set up. Linkages and cooperation with district level government departments need to be strengthened for reliable continuation of the project after closure.
- ⇒ **Implementation:** A beneficiary complaint mechanism has been set up in the course of the project, in the form of a calling centre. Notably, the feedback received by this mechanism is mainly positive. Actions have been defined by project staff to improve monitoring throughout the project.
- ⇒ **Planning/Design** of the project: The process of project proposal development was not ideal in terms of timing, communication and coordination between GRC and PRC. The logframe shows considerable gaps for measuring project outcomes and achievements.

Recommendations:

Recommendations for GRC-PRC Partnership

- ⇒ Continue IRFS activities in Sindh province after 2017, extend the approach to new areas. IRFSP 2015-17 is a successful pioneer project, replicate!
- ⇒ Update logframe of IRFSP according to standards and formally approve and circulate final version.
- ⇒ Revise roles and responsibilities of PRC-PM and PRC-PC
- ⇒ Explain and discuss financial approval and reporting processes in a meeting with all project staff, and identify possible areas for delays or gaps.

Recommendations for PRC

- ⇒ Define PRC strategy on how to integrate LH in DRR or even on how to make it a stand alone area of expertise.
- ⇒ Strengthen LH and FS capacity within the organisation
- ⇒ Invest in capacity building of field staff in areas relevant to IRFSP, like agriculture and livestock.

Recommendations for the IRFSP

- ⇒ Communicate the results of the midterm evaluation to relevant stakeholders and to BF
- ⇒ Don't expand intervention area to new villages. Request BMZ for approval of 10% reduced population size (~ 10.900 instead of 11.903).
- ⇒ Sign MoU between SAU und PRC-PHQ
- ⇒ Sign Tripartite Agreements between LCBO, District Government Departments (Agri and Livestock) and PRC
- ⇒ Recruit internship student from SAU (one for each district) for agricultural expertise for the project
- ⇒ Intensify collaboration with agriculture and livestock extension services, and support villages to build linkages to profit from their advisory services.
- ⇒ Intensify cooperation with other local and international NGOs working in the same areas.
- ⇒ Intensify working together with community volunteers for monitoring and other activities
- ⇒ Focus on CCA methods (compost, nurseries, saline resistant seeds)
- ⇒ Intensify focus on women, design appropriate trainings for their very low literacy status
- ⇒ Provide IEC materials on CCA and DM for CBOs which they can use in their communities
- ⇒ Implement saving schemes in all 22 villages, including trainings for CBOs (book keeping and record taking).
- ⇒ Organise exposure visits to best practise examples, also for women groups.

Recommendations for future projects

Project planning and management:

- ⇒ Emphasise the use of participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation approaches
- ⇒ Ensure participatory elaboration of logframe together with partner organisation to guarantee understanding and ownership down to field level. Design logframe with SMART indicators which are usable as project steering tool.
- ⇒ Simplify PMTool and improve in a way it can be used as steering tool (e.g. report generation)

Implementation:

- ⇒ Document selection criteria for intervention villages in a transparent way
- ⇒ Consider more simplified selection criteria for beneficiaries of cash grant, like a "poverty score card" or a "Food Consumption Score".
- ⇒ Selection criterion "possession of valid national ID card (CNIC)": PRC to support BFs in getting their identity cards. One possibility would be to organise a mobile NADRA-office (National Database and Registration Authority).