



IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

Improved Livelihood of Rural Communities (ILRC) – Phase III

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation supports its partners during the third phase of this project in order to enhance the self-subsistence and income of rural households by diversifying farm and farm-related activities, to reduce the vulnerability of communities to natural hazards and strengthen their resilience and to improve their living conditions by an integral and socially inclusive water and land use management.

“The trees planted in the valleys and uplands are going to be an asset and good alternative to shrubs in the future. Trenches, terraces and check dams have already reduced flash flood risks. The measures are also useful for recharging our water sources like wells and springs which are located in the valleys.”

Farokhodin, Chonoka village, Ruy-e-Doab district

THE CONTEXT

The majority of the afghan population lives in rural areas, mostly relying on agriculture and livestock for making a living. The poor road access makes it all remote. The population sustains on very limited fertile irrigated land in narrow valleys. People are forced to exploit the fragile uplands for livestock grazing, shrub collection for firewood and rain fed wheat, barley and oil crop cultivation. Due to lack of alternative energy options, the woody biomass is becoming very scarce with the consequence that people resort to burning manure. Thus, the livelihoods of the rural population in all project districts are increasingly threatened due to unsustainable use of upland areas which leads to more destructive runoff water, reduced water infiltration and reserves and loss of soil fertility, amplified by the climate change that increases the frequency and severity of floods and droughts. The supply of water for agriculture is the though most important factor contributing to food security and income of the rural poor.

THE HISTORY

ILRC project, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), started its operation in 2006 and has completed by end of February 2012 its second phase. In the second phase, ILRC focused on three pillars: a) social development (education, public health and governance); b) economic development (food security and farm and non-farm income) and c) Disaster Risk Reduction.

SDCs new strategy 2012-14 is focussing in the livelihood area on fewer partners, geographical regions and themes. The latter implies a major change for the orientation of the 3rd phase of ILRC i.e. to reduce the number of provinces, eliminate topics like education and public health and concentrate instead on water(shed), land and water management and economic development.

Thus, ILRC phase III envisages to enhance the self-subsistence and income of rural households by diversifying on-farm activities, to reduce the vulnerability of communities to natural hazards and to improve their living conditions by better and socially inclusive water and land use management.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: The livelihoods and resilience of the communities in the target districts are improved through economic development and sustainable water and land management benefitting both men and women while strengthening local actors.

Outcomes: Three outcomes contribute to this goal are:

- a) Reduced vulnerabilities of communities to flash floods and drought through integrated water and land resource management;
- b) Increased self-subsistence and income of rural families through improved and diversified agriculture and livestock production systems and better access to markets;
- c) Increased capacities and skills of local actors and institutions to effectively support and manage social and economic development initiatives.

APPROACH

Compared to the previous phases of ILRC the planning and implementation focus in ILRC phase III shifts from a district coverage approach towards the development of selected watershed areas (upstream) and the related land and water management and economic development mid-stream and downstream. This based on a participatory community development and water and land use planning process.

A systematic transfer of implementation responsibilities to local development actors and service providers substantiated with a clear capacity building plan is envisaged.

INTERVENTION AREA

The project is being implemented in selected Community Development Councils (CDCs) in Saighan and Kahmard district (Bamyan province), Ruy-e-Doab district (Samagan Province) and Tala-wa-Barfak district (Baghlan Province).

MAIN PARTNERS

The main implementing partners at community and district level are the Community Development Councils (CDCs), the District Development Assemblies (DDAs) and the Economic Interest Groups (EIGs). At provincial and national level the project works with the provincial and district governments and the line ministries (MAIL, MRRD, ANDMA and MoEW).

ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

- ILRC in its second phase has covered 64% (222) out of the 348 existing CDCs in the 5 target districts. At least 50% of the population of these CDCs has been reached;
- More than 17'000 men and women participated in literacy, functional literacy, skills development, computer and English courses;
- Health messages in different forms reached some 86'000 men and 89'000 women in the different districts. 137 have functioning school health corners, benefitting more than 50'000 pupils;
- The Code of Conduct developed by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation has been discussed and signed with all target CDCs and 6 MoU have been signed with line ministries and ANDMA. Totally 122 social audits were conducted related to 69 infrastructure projects;
- More than 10'000 male and female farmers have improved their plant and vegetable production by using 15 new crop varieties and 14 new vegetable types;
- Almost 1'300 male livestock keepers are members 56 livestock EIGs and 870 women members of 174 poultry groups;
- 8 sectors for micro entrepreneurship have been appraised. Out of them, 4 have been followed up in more detail and 1'300 men and 1'925 women micro entrepreneurs received support and training;
- Almost 5'500 CDC and community members attended risk assessment and response meetings and 54 CDCs have elaborated disaster management plans in collaboration with their CBDRM committees;
- 69 protective infrastructure projects have been realised and are benefitting more than 80'000 persons.

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Photo front page: Through greenhouses the production of new and off-season vegetables can be strengthened.
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Photo: Production of new vegetable products in a greenhouse: cabbage, tomatoes, green pepper, egg plants, cucumber, spinach, etc.



Photo: Women are trained on how to run their Economic Interest Groups (EIGs).



Photo: Water reservoir in a upstream watershed area.



Photo: Potatoes ready to sell on the market.

QUICK FACTS

Project start: October 1st, 2005

Current phase: 2012 - 2016

Major Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

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THE PERSPECTIVES

Given the importance of watershed development and water and land use planning, ILRC will seek close collaboration with the Sustainable Land Management Institute Organisation (SLMIO) housed at the University of Bamyan and also supported by SDC. In addition, ILRC will also collaborate with other complementary development initiatives in the project districts. Such collaboration must though take into consideration a minimal consensus on implementation approaches oriented towards sustainable development.

ILRC strives furthermore to build capacities of local NGOs or rather Community Based Organisations (CBOs) which will take over training and monitoring tasks on their own, initially accompanied by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and the partner ministries.

