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Rebuilding flood affected farmers' communities:

Inspirational human stories



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Inspirational human stories

M. Saifullah Chaudhry¹

The case studies presented in this selection come from a One UN Project "Livelihood Restoration, Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in Sind," (LRP) funded by United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) and jointly implemented by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UN Women.

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Preface

This compilation of case studies demonstrates the resilience of farmers' communities in Sindh province who have braved the devastating floods of 2010 and rebuilt their lives. These success stories of human struggle to ensure food security have come from a One UN project, "Livelihood Restoration, Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in Sindh province" (LRP) project implemented by the International Labour Organization ILO, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and UN Women. The LRP project has been funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS).

These case studies demonstrate how joint efforts by three UN agencies brought meaningful change in the lives of flood effect peasant communities in Sindh province. These stories are about illiterate women, and men as well as educated young women and men who have benefitted from new on-farm and off-farm skills to ensure/improve their livelihood opportunities to earn a decent income. In remote villages of interior Sindh, the LRP Project has empowered ordinary women and men by diversifying their income generation opportunities that has led to food security for their vulnerable families.

The LRP project demonstrates how several UN Agencies can bring together their respective expertise to increase effectiveness and improve results. These case studies show how One UN can produce better results while delivering as one.

From the ILO Country Director

The Pakistan Decent Work Country Programme II supports Pakistan's efforts to apply twelve of the thirty four ratified Conventions, including the 8 Fundamental Conventions. The LRP project supports the application of Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) and Human Resource Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195). Moreover, this project also promotes the ratification of ILO Convention No. 142 and Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177). Since the Sindh Industrial Relations Act of 2013 has recognized the agriculture and fisheries workers as industrial workers, Right to Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11) is also implied and the project thereunder is promoting unionization of agriculture workers.

In 2010, the floods devastated livelihood opportunities across Pakistan. In Sindh province the peasant communities and farmers took the brunt of those massive floods. Three UN Agencies, FAO, UN Women and ILO under One UN framework, came together to create/strengthen decent income generation opportunities of peasant communities and ensure food securities of their families. The One UN Joint Project "Livelihood Restoration, Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in Sindh Province" (LRP) project is conceived and implemented by three UN agencies to maximize benefits to the target peasant communities. The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) has provided funds for this project of three years duration. The project aims to restore and protect the livelihoods and empower the poor and vulnerable peasants who are affected by droughts, floods and insecurity.

The LRP Project already demonstrates that joint projects of different UN Agencies have much higher dividends in terms of effectiveness and improved results. The One UN framework allows different UN agencies to bring together their expertise to the maximum advantages of the target groups. These joint efforts have created decent income generation opportunities for women and men through both on- and off-farm skills training programme that ensures their food securities. This compilation of real life case studies already indicate the positive impact of the LRP project and how it is progressively transforming the lives of women and men beneficiaries in District Dadu and District Mirpurkhas. These positive project impacts will certainly provide insights that will feed into programming implications within the One UN framework.

Shirin Khan,
Officer-in-Charge,
ILO Country Office for Pakistan



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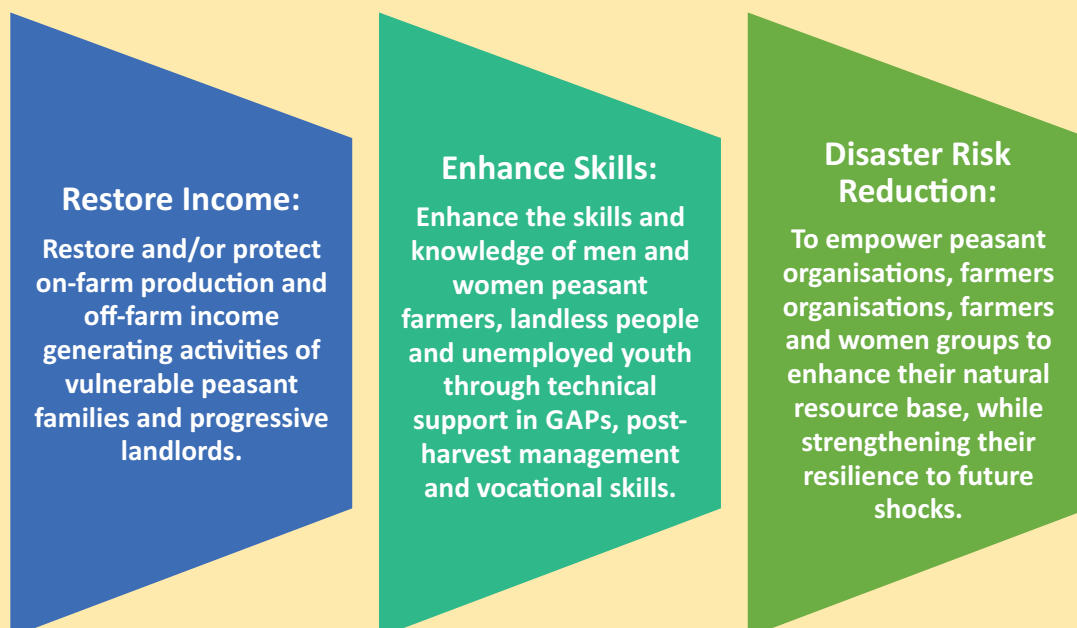
About the Project

In July 2010, unexpected monsoon rains caused flooding of a significant magnitude affecting the entire length of Pakistan. Sindh was the most severely affected province with some 970,000 households suffering and agricultural losses estimated at US\$2,301.6 million. Districts that suffered the highest losses in Sindh province included Qambar Shahdad Kot, Jacobabad, Dadu and Jamshoro. 90 percent of the rural population in Sindh were directly affected because their primary occupations were crop production and animal husbandry. Most of them were sharecroppers and agricultural wage labourers.

Other job opportunities in rural Sindh were limited to few trades such as blacksmiths, carpenters, water carriers, weavers, barbers, among others. The population in rural parts of Sindh with national identity cards ranges from two-thirds for males and one-third for females. This means that access to formal credit is impossible, ownership of land cannot be granted and the right to vote cannot be exercised. Women in the informal sector are usually atomised as home-based piece-rate workers. Having no control over production processes, informal women workers are vulnerable and dependent on those supplying them with work, often middlemen.

The LRP project is designed to avert such challenges in the socio-economic fabric of Sindh. In response to this devastation caused by the floods, the three UN Agencies, ILO, FAO, and UN Women, are jointly implementing the LRP project. The UNTFHS has funded this project. The overall goal of this project is "to restore and protect the livelihoods and empower the poor and vulnerable peasants (men, women, boys and girls) dependent on feudal and tribal landholding and farming systems and affected by droughts, floods and insecurity."

The project has the following three components:



The LRP project is working in remote villages of two districts in the interior of Sindh. In District Dadu the project is working in three Union Councils (UCs) Gozo, Mitho Babar and Kandai Chokhi. In district MirpurKhas, the project is working in two UCs of Makhan Sammo and Doulatpur.

The table on the right presents the Districts, Union Councils and villages where LRP Project is in operation.

Following are the maps of the Dadu and Mirpurkhas districts.



Dadu District		
Union Councils		
Gozo	Mitho Babar	Kandai Chokhi
Villages		
1. Chappar Khan Gadehi	1. Ahori	1. Ahmed Khan Laghari
2. Fateh M. Gadehi	2. Abdullah Mallah	2. Azi Naich
3. Jaro Khan	3. Kumbh Shareef	3. Baid
4. Khushalani		4. Bero Khan
5. Sher M. Gadehi		5. Gharo
6. Sultan Khan Gadehi		6. Khair Muhammad
		7. Looja
		8. Nabi Bux
		9. Rejh Pur
		10. Sahi Khan Laghari
		11. Satar Dino Deeper

Mirpurkhas District	
Union Councils	
Makhan Sammo	Doulatpur
Villages	
1. Dayo Patel	1. Balauch Farm
2. Dewan Sahab	2. Daulat Laghari
3. Sanjhar Khaskheli	3. HoutKhan Laghari
	4. Jam Laghari
	5. Noor Muahmmad
	6. Shafi Muhammad
	7. Umar Farm

Key Achievements

120 Community Organizations (CO) have been formed.

120 Field Farmer Schools (FFS) have been established.

3,000 Field Farmer Schools (FFS)/Women Open School (WOS) farmers have received agriculture inputs.

1,500 home-based women from hari farm families have benefited from integrated homestead kitchen gardening packages, comprising of poultry along with shelter net, drinker, feeder and egg trays, goats, vegetable seed, fertilizer.

28 out of 30 Tube Well Water User's Associations have been formed in District Dadu, and registered under Sindh Water Management Ordinance 2002.

653 women in 50 villages have received a two day gender mainstreaming training.

662 women and men have been trained in vocational skills, and have been provided with tool kits, and basic disaster preparedness orientation.

250 project beneficiary women and men have been linked with the local microfinance institution and received loans.

2,000 women Home-based Workers (HBWs) of peasant families have improved access to social security schemes, including National Database and Registration Authority identity cards and BISP.

1,007 women HBWs have been organized in forty five groups.

727 landless women farmers have been organized into 31 women farmer groups.

600 women HBWs have availed their CNICs and smart cards.

666 women HBWs have registered with various social security schemes. These includes 250 women registered with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal under individual financial assistance, 72 registered with BISP.

696 men participants of 33 Farmers Field Schools (FFS) in district Mirpur Khas and district Dadu, have been trained to visualize concepts of gender equality, the need for women's participation in the economy and their right to public space, safety and education.

23 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have been engaged to deliver the Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) component.

2,016 landless farmers' (1,239 men and 777 women sharecropper) have gained an understanding about the prevention of the high incidence of diseases prevalent in the community. These beneficiaries were from sixty villages. There was a special focus on pregnant women and infants through various seminars, community gatherings and planned training sessions.

2,325 farmers (1,457 men and 868 women) now have an enhanced understanding on the need to adopt basic health and hygiene practices i.e. hand washing, water purification methods etc.



Acronyms

BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
CBDRR	Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Cards
CO	Community Organizations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FFS	Field Farmer Schools
FO	Farmer's Organisations
HBW	Home-based Workers
ILO	International Labour Organization
KAB	Know About Business
LRP	Livelihood Restoration, Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in Sindh Province
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRSP	National Rural Support Organization
PO	Peasant Organisations
UCs	Union Councils
UN	United Nations
UNTFHS	United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
WOS	Women Open School



Case studies:

Inspirational human stories







Gena: A woman of many hues

The Koli tribes are primarily concentrated in the fertile flood plain of Sindh and agriculture is the basis of their economy. Mostly these tribes are poor, earning small amounts of money as sharecroppers. Even the average monsoon flood disrupts their livelihoods. The massive floods of 2010 destroyed agricultural land in the Mirpurkhas District and also the livelihood and houses of many Koli people. Sajhar Khaskheli was one village where the Koli community suffered the devastation of the floods.

Gena, who is 39 years old, lives with her husband, Nursing and four sons. Her family was affected because the floods damaged her house. Her husband, a sharecropper, became unemployed as there was no work on the farms. Instead he started working as a labourer. His earnings were meagre and Gena wanted to increase the family income. "I was delighted to hear about the introduction of the machine embroidery training programme (initiated by the ILO) in our village for women to enable them to earn money. I was a good student and learnt how to embroider quickly. After the training, I was given a sewing machine to carry out embroidery. Now, I earn monthly an amount of 1,000 Pakistan rupee (PKR) (\$10) through my machine embroidery skills," said a confident Gena, showing off her sewing machine and her embroidery.



As an energetic and enterprising woman, Gena wanted to do more. When the ILO offered to link women up with micro credit opportunities, to help them start small enterprises, Gena took a loan of PKR10,000 (\$100) and opened a little shop to sell household consumables. Her confidence is obvious as she stands in her small shop to show off the different items she sells. "My daily sale at this shop is PKR200 (\$2). This is additional income that is good enough to keep our kitchen running. We are assured of meals every day," beamed Gena.

She has also learnt many new things to be better prepared in case floods hit again next year. She has learned to construct a cooking place at a higher ground level, to keep children safe during

the floods, to ensure that house walls have support, and to keep grains at an elevated place in the house. She has also learnt to keep children clean and ensure they wash their hands before they eat. "I am so proud of my wife. I didn't know that she has the ability to do so many things in addition to taking care of the house and children. I feel so proud when everyone praises her. It's not only her success its mine as well," said her smiling husband.

A kitchen gardener rises from adversity

Nursing, Gena's husband, is also an enterprising farmer. The devastation left by the 2010 floods made him realize the need to learn new skills to increase his income and ensure food security for his family. Prior to the floods, he was an ordinary sharecropper but afterwards, when the FAO started a programme to teach farmers new cultivation techniques, Nursing got himself enrolled.

Nursing did not have any farm land and the idea of kitchen gardening appealed to him. After the training, he started to apply his new skills on a small piece of land next to his house. He converted the small piece of land into a kitchen garden by making ridges to cultivate vegetables. He also applied irrigation techniques, using small pipes, and used mulching to conserve soil moisture. (Mulching is a technique whereby green leaves from bushes are spread on top of irrigated soil to slow down water evaporation). Nursing also learnt how to use leaves of the


neem tree as an organic pesticide. He has already grown many different vegetables in his small kitchen garden. "I have cultivated spinach, guwaar, turnips, okra and eggplant among others. The kitchen garden is saving me at least PKR150 (\$1.5) to PKR300 (\$3) daily, as we do not buy vegetables from the market. I am now preparing my kitchen garden and making it ready for the next harvest of vegetables," Nursing said.

Nursing also continues to work as a waged farm worker to earn money. However, his newly learnt kitchen gardening skills are not only helping him to ensure the food security of his family but also bringing in extra income, as they sell the surplus vegetables.

"We never grew vegetables for our kitchen. We would buy these from the market when we had money. Now we grow vegetables for our consumption and surplus is sold," smiled Nursing.







When dreams
become a reality

The Allah Bachio Rager is a tiny village in District Mirpurkhas. The cluster of neatly kept mud houses were humming with women clad in colourful clothes going about their daily routine. Persin is the mother of six boys and one daughter and the proud owner of a small shop that provides daily items to the villagers. "My monthly profit from the sale is PKR4,500 (\$45). In this village, mine is the only shop that sells so many things that include household items from detergent powder to sweets. Most of my customers are women and children in the village. All this started after the floods destroyed our mud houses. When we returned it was like starting from scratch. But, I am so happy that I got a small loan to open this shop and earn money. Soon, I will save enough to increase my business after returning the loan," shared Persin.

The village Allah Bachio Rager was among those villages that came under the One UN Livelihood project area. FAO and ILO introduced their respective programmes to rebuild the lives of people and increase their income and food security. ILO, through its partner National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) extended small loans to women to start their own businesses. Persin was one such beneficiary of the ILO-NRSP programme. She borrowed PKR 25,000 (\$250) and was supposed to return a total of PKR30,833 (\$308.3), and has already paid back

30% of the loan from profits she earned from her shop.

"The loan I took helped me not only to set-up this shop but I also bought a goat. The shop started doing good business and my goat gave birth to two baby goats. I use the goat milk to make tea. Soon these will be grown up and bring me good money when I sell them," Persin told us.

FAO introduced kitchen gardening in this village to strengthen women's abilities to ensure food security for their family. These women were taught about soil, soil types, seeds, organic pesticides and fertilizers. "I have never heard about kitchen gardening. This was such a novel idea! I enrolled myself in kitchen gardening before the programme started in our village. We now have our own kitchen garden and I have cultivated spinach, peas, cauliflower, tomatoes and carrots. It's great to grow our own vegetables and our reliance on shops has reduced which saves money too," Persin said proudly and was pleased to share her many talents.

Persin is one of many women in the village Allah Bachio Roger who have benefitted from interventions made by the ILO and FAO. These families learnt new ways to earn money and to ensure that their families had enough to eat.



An entrepreneur in the midst of Catastrophe

In July-August 2010 devastation was caused in Pakistan by severe flooding, caused by unprecedented monsoon rains. The flooding affected 18 million people, rendering 11 million people homeless and killing 1.2 million livestock across Pakistan. Within a month, millions of people were deprived of shelter and livelihoods. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of cultivatable land and crops were destroyed in the traditional food-basket regions of Sindh and Punjab.

"It was a very difficult time, as we barely managed to save ourselves from the floods. We lost our belongings and found refuge in a relief camp. My elder brother, who is a farm worker and was the only earner of the family, had no job as flood waters destroyed all agricultural lands," said Muhammad Saffar, a pleasant young man in his mid-twenties. His small village, Daulat

Laghari, was among those villages in district Mirpurkhas that were hit by the massive flood waters in 2010. Saffar's brother was responsible for feeding the family of eight, including his elderly mother, his wife and three young children, and two siblings.

Saffar had completed his Bachelors' degree in science, but employment opportunities were limited. "My elder brother had to take the entire burden with his limited income. There were times when we were not sure if we would have a meal at dinner or not! My family had invested on my education, and despite the crisis due to floods, I was unable to earn money. This situation was making me very frustrated," said Saffar. His face became tense as he recalled the bitter memories of the effects of the floods on his poor household.



One day he heard that ILO had started a computer skills training centre near his village for educated young people who had been affected by the floods. Saffar registered to receive computer skills training. In six months he had learnt how to manage a computer and operate the different programmes of MS Office. Saffar related his experiences during the learning process, "Our teacher was excellent, who not only taught us how to handle and operate a computer but also motivated us to envisage how we could possibly find employment or livelihood opportunities by using computers. The ILO officials, during their field visits, also motivated us to explore how our new skills could cater to local market needs."

This motivational encouragement helped Saffar to think in an entrepreneurial way. "I saw an opportunity to continue to offer computer skills training to the rest of the unemployed youth in the area. In collaboration with another friend, who also received computer skills training under this ILO project, we developed a basic business plan to start a computer training centre," Saffar said.

Within eight months, his income had increased considerably from PKR3,000 to PKR9,000 (\$30

to \$90) a month. This transformation took place rapidly. Saffar believes that education, computer skills training, his entrepreneurial approach and the encouragement he received from the ILO, gave him the confidence to take the plunge. His first marketing campaign included free registration for the first thirty applicants. To his surprise, his academy received fifty applications within a few days. Now, he offers computer training to around fifteen young men, and more young boys are also interested in joining his training centre. Saffar's passion for teaching computer skills has made him a sought after computer trainer.

"Now I give money to my mother and brother so that they can take care of the family expenditures. I have savings as well. I have a purpose in my life which motivates me to make a difference in the life of the youth of Daulat Laghari. My brother feels financially relieved and his children attend school. Now our family is not totally dependent on farm work earnings. Moreover, in case there are floods again, we are well-prepared unlike in the 2010 floods," concluded a confident Saffar with a radiant smile.



“ I saw an opportunity to continue to offer computer skills training to the rest of the unemployed youth in the area. In collaboration with another friend, we developed a basic business plan to start a computer training centre. ”

Saffar

From strength to strength

Aurangzeb, 21, and his family were severely affected by the 2010 floods that played havoc in the Sindh province of Pakistan. He was a graduate but lacked any employable skills to help his family in their time of crisis. However, with a few months of computer training and an entrepreneurial approach his income rose sharply from zero to PKR6,000 (\$60) a month – thanks to a joint UN initiative to help restore the livelihoods of flood affected families in rural Sindh.

His village, Daulat Laghari, is tucked away in the fertile District Mirpurkhas of Sindh Province. The floods destroyed the agricultural farms around his village. Overnight, many families lost

houses, belongings and livelihoods. The road to recovery for these poor families was long and challenging.

Aurangzeb's father is an ordinary farm worker and the floods rendered his family vulnerable, threatening their food security. "I would feel very frustrated, as despite being educated I was unable to do anything to earn money for my family. I tried to work as a wage labourer, but the money was too little to feed my family and that made me more frustrated," Aurangzeb said, sadly. Even at his young age, life had already taught him some tough lessons but little did he know there was still hope.



"One day it seemed as if opportunity knocked at my door. A friend of mine told me that the International Labour Organization had introduced a computer training programme near our village for flood-affected youth. I met the people at the training center and was excited to learn about new opportunities. I got myself enrolled and in a short duration learned MS Word software, computer networking and web page development. I felt I could do something meaningful and earn money for my family," said Aurangzeb with a bright smile. He learnt many new skills related to computer networking and webpage development, and showed a natural aptitude for the work.

During the training Aurangzeb often discussed what to do after the completion of computer training with his classmate and friend, Saffar. They agreed that afterwards they would start a computer training center, because many other young people in nearby villages were interested to learn computer skills.

Soon after completion of their training, Aurangzeb and his friend started their computer center with one computer and one table. Now their business has expanded and there are eight computers and fifteen students. Aurangzeb teaches his students how to use MS Word software and how to create webpages. Before this initiative Aurangzeb had no income, but after the computer training and starting his small business, he earns PKR6,000 (\$60) a month. He is confident about his skills and looks forward to a brighter future.

"I cannot thank ILO enough, for helping me learn a skill that gets me a decent income, every month. Floods or no floods, with the blessing of God, my new computer skills and earning ability, my family will not have to face the uncertainty about whether there will be food on the table at night or not," smiled a confident Aurangzeb.

A young man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a white button-down shirt, is smiling broadly at the camera. He is standing under a rustic thatched roof made of wooden poles and dried palm fronds. To his right, he is operating a red manual press machine, which is mounted on a large wooden stump. The machine has a large red wheel and a vertical rod with a red handle. The background shows a dirt path leading away from the building, with some green trees and a clear sky. The overall scene suggests a rural or agricultural setting.

A blessing in
disguise

At an intersection outside Mirpurkhas city, a small motorcycle repair shop is managed by Allah Ditto, an amiable young man aged 23. His business is running well and he is earning decent money because there are many customers who need their motorcycles repaired or their punctured tyres fixed.

"Presently, my monthly earnings are PKR12,000 (\$120) to PKR15,000 (\$150), three times what I used to earn," shared a jubilant Ditto, busy mending a punctured tube. However, until recently he was a poor farm worker with a monthly income of just PKR4,000 (\$40) who would invariably face challenges feeding his family. Ironically it was a natural disaster that changed his life, for good.

The massive floods in 2010 destroyed the agricultural fields and nearby villages, displacing families and causing untold losses in District Mirpurkhas. Allah Ditto's family was also among those affected by floods. He lives in the village of Sanjhar Khaskeli with his parents and a large family of ten, including his brothers and sisters, their spouses and small children. The floods destroyed Ditto's house and he lost his donkey cart which he used for agricultural work and to transport goods. For months he could not find employment as all the farms were destroyed. However, Ditto is an enterprising person and he kept looking for opportunities to acquire skills to earn a sustainable monthly income.

One day he learnt from his uncle that ILO had started a skills training programme to increase the income of flood affected people near his village. Ditto was intrigued and approached the ILO skills training center to learn about types of skills training being offered. He enrolled himself for the motorcycle repair training. "The trainers

were so cooperative and competent that I did not face any difficulty in learning how to conduct basic motorcycle repair work. During training I decided to start my own repair workshop outside the village on the main road," Ditto said. After the training he borrowed money from his uncle to set up a small workshop, where he also started to repair punctured tyres.

"I am so happy to have learnt this skill and set up my own motorcycle repair workshop. I do not have any competition in the area and therefore get good business on a daily basis," Ditto shared. He is also teaching this skill to his younger brother and a cousin, and hoping that the quality of his work will improve and so will the pace of business, resulting in better earnings. Now Ditto is a happy man, as his income has increased three fold compared to what he used to earn as an agricultural worker. For him the floods proved to be a blessing in disguise, as it forced him to learn a skill and the ILO helped him to start earning a new sustainable income.

"Unfortunately, I am illiterate, but the skill of motorcycle repair and my own business is now helping me earn a decent wage. Floods or no floods, my business will continue to bring food on the table. My family is so proud of me," said the visibly proud Ditto.

The inspiring tale of a farmer



Nothing gives more pleasure to a farmer than a ripe crop ready to give a good harvest. However, the story of 34-year old Allah Ditta was an amazing agricultural experiment that changed his cultivation practices and brought him three times higher profits than before. "This year the new practice of multi-cropping has earned me about PKR200,000 (\$2,000) from one farm, thrice the income of when I used to cultivate one crop only. In our area, we have never heard or experimented with cultivating three crops in one go. We have always cultivated one crop at a time. The way we prepared our farm, the farm irrigation practices, and the use of pesticides, all has been changed for good - thanks to this man," said a grinning Allah Ditta, gesturing towards a local staff member from FAO.

After the 2010 floods devastated several villages and farms in District Mirpurkhas, FAO started an intervention to provide relief to the farmers at the tail-end of the canal system – who typically suffer more both in floods and droughts. "We established Farmers Groups and then educated them about new methods of preparing land, multi crop cultivation, irrigation techniques, how to conserve soil moisture, and use of organic fertilizer and pesticide. Those enterprising farmers who adopted our suggested techniques benefitted immensely," said Aftab Solangi, local staff of the FAO.

Allah Ditta, from Sanjhar Khaskeli village, was one of the farmers who joined the FAO run farmers' school. Like most local farmers he used to follow traditional farming practices. However, with his enterprising personality he found it easy to adopt the new techniques for land preparation, irrigation and cultivation that FAO taught the Farmers Groups. He prepared his

land in ridges, allowing him to carry out multiple cropping and use less amount of water for irrigation. "From this one acre farm land, I have already cultivated onions and cotton. Now, the crop of sugarcane is ready to be harvested soon. I have already harvested 1,600 kilogrammes of onions (40 munds), 1,200 kilogrammes of cotton and my expectations are to get 24,000 kilogrammes of sugarcane (800 munds) and my income has tripled," he explained. By following FAO's advice of new cultivation techniques and multi cropping, Allah Ditta's farm income has dramatically increased guaranteeing food security for his family.

"Floods brought devastation and I have suffered multiple losses. I am a small farmer and floods had impacted me and my family negatively. However floods also brought organizations like FAO and ILO that helped me to bring back prosperity to my family. I have also borrowed PKR10,000 (\$100) through ILO's help, and used this money to buy a calf. I will pay off the loan and when the animal is ready it will be sold for good money – at least PKR50,000 (\$500)," said Allah Ditta.

The joint efforts of FAO and ILO have brought a real change in the life of farmers of this area. Many farmers from nearby villages now understand the benefits of multi cropping. For Allah Ditta the benefits are clear. His three older children, one girl and two boys, now regularly go to school. The increased income has ensured food security for his family, and improved their ability to withstand any future natural disasters. "I am glad that I followed the advice of FAO and improved my agricultural cultivation practices," Allah Ditta concluded.



Beyond survival

Baja, proud mother of two girls and four boys, braved the savagery of flood waters. "When the news of the approaching flood spread, we left for higher ground with our children. Flood water destroyed homes and also swept away our belongings. Rebuilding our lives was a slow and painstaking process. These people (ILO) came and taught us many things. I make rullies (colour bed spreads)

and they taught me how to sell my products better to get more money. I learnt the benefit of improving the quality of my product, the importance of selling point access including direct market access. I used to earn a few hundred rupees but now I earn monthly at least PKR4,000 (\$40)," smiled Baja. She had benefitted from ILO's Know About Business (KAB) interventions under the LRP project.

She also benefitted from the kitchen gardening introduced by the FAO. "This was such a new concept for us. When I heard about vegetable cultivation I got my-self enrolled. Learning about soil type, seeds, organic pesticides and fertilizer was exciting. I grew several vegetables like spinach, tomatoes, and okra. Growing your own vegetables has triple benefits, first one does not spend money to buy vegetables, second, unspent money is saved, and third, surplus vegetables can be sold," Baja shared her wisdom and the women sitting around her smiled and nodded their heads as a sign of approval.

There were other interventions by the UN Women, which provided valuable information to women for their empowerment. These included information on equal treatment of girls and boys, the importance of washing hands, health issues, and how to respond in case disasters like

the floods take place again. "We learnt the importance of hand washing before meal preparation and eating and how it prevents illness. We are also now better prepared in case the floods come again. We have made our houses on a slightly higher ground and keep grains at an elevated place," shared Baja. Baja is among those women who have learnt new innovative ways to enhance their income through ILO's KAB programme, and has received training on kitchen gardening and input support from the FAO, and information on rights and empowerment from UN Women. "This increased income and kitchen gardening has enabled me to ensure food security for my children," Baja concluded and appeared satisfied and grateful sitting among the other women.



An empowered woman

“Women should help their husbands to add to family income for a better life of their children,” opined Hamdi Maojee, an illiterate rural woman of village Sanjar Khaskheli. A lesson that Hamdi and her husband, Maogee, learnt in the aftermath of the 2010 floods. “My husband used to barely earn PKR100 (\$1) daily as a farm labourer. With my help, we now earn a daily profit of PKR500 (\$5) through our vegetable growing and selling business,” revealed a smiling Hamdi.

The floods changed their lives. Hamdi lives with her husband and two sons – aged seven and eleven years. Flood waters damaged their small house and also destroyed agriculture fields around the village and there were not many

employment opportunities for Maogee after the floods.

One day, Hamdi heard that an organization, FAO, launched a Women's Open School to help women learn about kitchen gardening that could also bring in more income. She felt motivated and joined the school along with a group of other village women. “Our landlord was upset about my decision. He believed women should spend their time working in the fields rather than attending training courses. But my husband supported my decision,” said Hamdi.

As it turned out, Hamdi became one of the most active participants of the group, eagerly following all the techniques discussed. “By the



way, in addition to learning new kitchen gardening techniques, I also learned how to write my name during these sessions," smiled Hamdi. Soon, she set up a small kitchen garden near her home where she applied all the methods she had learned to grow vegetables.

After a short while, Hamdi's garden began producing vegetables, and she started selling them with her husband's support. As the sales kept increasing, Hamdi and Maojee realized that their small plot of land and a vegetable share from the collective plot at the Women's Open School could not produce enough vegetables to meet the demands of their customers. The couple spoke to other villagers and offered to sell vegetables on their behalf.

Hamdi and Maojee started collecting rupees PKR700 to PKR800 (\$ 7 to \$ 8) worth of vegetables daily from their neighbours. They rented a push-cart for PKR50 a day to transport the vegetables to sell them in the nearby communities. In the beginning their profits were low, but gradually their business picked up to give a daily profit of PKR500 (\$5). They were already on the path of a steady income.

Confident with the success of their small business, both Hamdi and Maojee now have bigger dreams! "There's a lot of demand for our vegetables, and we also want to expand our vegetable selling business," shared Hamdi. The couple plans to purchase their own push-cart and dream about opening a vegetable shop in the nearby town as soon as they save enough money. Presently, most of their earnings are used to pay for the family's daily living expenses. However, they are also saving money for difficult times in case the floods hit their area again. "This steady increase in the family income has enabled us to send our boys to school," Hamdi said with joy. "The FAO has taught me that education and learning new skills is key to a better life for the family."

Champa's rise to success

A cluster of 50 odd houses fashioned out of mud on the outskirts of Mirpurkhas city was buzzing with life. The laughter of children, the welcoming demeanour of men and women, an abundance of poultry and livestock around each of the houses indicate a relatively prospering community. Koli tribesmen, who primarily earn their livelihood working as sharecropper, reside in this village Sanjhar Khaskheli. A few years ago, the floods almost destroyed this village of mud houses and rendered people homeless and jobless. Water slowly receded and food security remained a major concern for the Koli women and men.

"I was very worried as my husband could not find any work. He only knew how to farm and there was no agriculture left. One day, folks from

ILO arrived here and gave us a novel idea of constructing environmentally friendly chullas (stoves). They helped equip and train us with a new skill we never thought of. I, especially as a woman, am now able to construct what is known as a Swissopak Chullah (stove) and charge a fee for my services. My husband also does the same. Our family's monthly income has risen sharply from PKR9,000 (\$90) to PKR18,000 (\$180) – and half of it is from my work too," shared a confident Champa, a physically strong woman and a mother of seven boys and three girls.

Both husband and wife were earning much less as agricultural workers. Their earnings have substantially increased with their newly learned skill of constructing stoves. Swissopak Chullah, has resonated well with the needs of women in



villages. Champa and her husband travel around the villages selling their skill. "Business is good and we now have a stable income. I have been able to buy a goat of our own and saved PKR10,000 (\$100) in case another emergency hits us again, and bought myself some silver jewellery too," smiled Champa while showing off her traditional bangles made out of silver.

There were many reasons for the rapid popularity of the Swiss Chullah. "We were impressed by the innovation that our partner, Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, has been responsible for this stove. It is designed using both, indigenous ideas and modern thinking. It is an efficient double stove which can use small sticks or twigs to work. The efficiency of this stove is much better than the traditional one, lime-mud is used in its construction thus making it resistant to floods and rain water. This stove allows the use of two pots while firewood is used only for one. This low consumption of firewood has strong environmental dividends. ILO beneficiaries like Champa, who learnt such skills are now earning a decent wage by selling their services to construct Swissopak Chullah for other people," shared Zaheer Arif, Project Officer, for the ILO.

"So far I have constructed more than two hundred and fifty chullahs (stoves) and charged PKR300 (\$3) for each. I promote this stove robustly among women. This stove has become popular due to its efficiency. It discretely emits smoke through the chimney, and the mud chamber keeps the heat trapped inside for efficient cooking. Both these elements have

made the lives of women easier while cooking food. The raised platform prevents children from coming near the fire or touching the hot cooking utensils. It has also made my life a lot easier and cooking is less troublesome than before." Champa divulged the real benefits of having Swissopak Chullah while striking a pose during a dry demo of the stove. Champa is just one such enterprising woman who not only learnt a new skill but also applied it to earn a steady income. Their move from sharecropping and farming to applying a newly acquired skill in an enterprising manner has helped Champa to contribute to the family financially and furthermore ensure there is food on the table, every night.



The triumph of four men

As daily wagers most farm workers earn small amounts of money in rural Sindh. Income is not steady and relies on several factors including ones relationship with the landlord. Moreover, for the tail-end farm workers the onset of drought or floods seriously effects their income. The mega floods of 2010 in Sindh not only took away the livelihood and livestock of farm workers but also destroyed or damaged their houses. Kanji, 50 years of age, and his friends were also among those farm workers who were affected by the floods and were exploring other off-farm employment opportunities. It was at the same time when ILO and its partner organization announced a skills training programme in the village of Kanji, which transformed Kanji's life, for good.

"Can you imagine, a 30-day skills training course in constructing Swissopak Chullah (Stove), has brought me and my friends good money, that is supplementing our income from farm work. Depending on the business we get to construct stoves and each of us earn an additional

PKR8,000 (\$80) to PKR12,000 (\$120) a month," shared Kanji while sitting among his four friends who also learnt how to construct the Swissopak Chullah. These men have benefitted hugely from the ILO organized training of constructing the stove through its partners Heritage Foundation of Pakistan.

Kanji, after learning this new skill, has convinced nine of his friends to join him and has started an informal company. They work together to construct stoves in the houses of villagers and charge a small fee. Kanji's wife Champa has also joined them in constructing the Chullah. Kanji has also received training from FAO on kitchen gardening and grows vegetables. He has also taken a small loan of PKR25,000 (\$250) from ILO's partner NRSP and bought five goats. He is hoping to sell these goats at a higher price later and make profits even after paying the loan and interest. However, Kanji is most pleased with his growing business of constructing Swissopak Chullah.

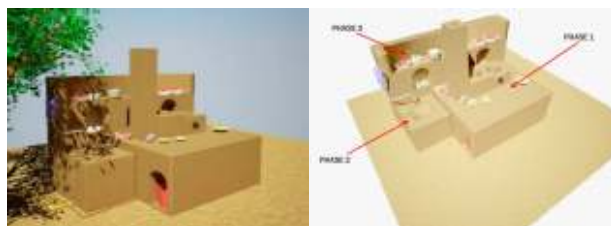


In this stove construction business, Kanji's lead team consist of his four close friends. Each has his own story:

- Prem and his wife Panchoon have a 6 year old daughter who now goes to school. When the floods hit his village they could barely save anything. As a farm worker his income was meager. However, he joined Kanji and learnt the skill of constructing stoves. He now earns a monthly amount of PKR9,000 (\$90) from constructing stoves. That adds to his income that he still gets from farm labour.
- Lakhoo and his wife Samjhoo have two daughters and a small boy. Their daughters go to school. Lakhoo has also learnt the art of constructing stoves with Kanji. Now, Lakhoo works under the leadership of Kanji who has not only mastered the skills but also knows how to market it and maintain a steady stream of clients. Lakhoo is eager to get as much work as he can get and his monthly income from constructing stove ranges between PKR10,000 (\$100) to PKR12,000 (\$120).
- Wasand and his wife Harsia only have one young daughter. Kanji encouraged Wasand to join his team to construct stoves. Wasand is a relatively new entrant to this group and is still mastering the skill of constructing stoves. His monthly income is PKR6,000 (\$60) to PKR8,000 (\$80). Wasand is very confident that soon he will be able to increase his income as he masters the skill.
- Jillal and his wife Rajke have one 8 year old son. He spends his time both working as farm labourer and also as constructing stoves. Kanji has also taught him the new skill of constructing stoves.

These four men are part of a ten-man team that is slowly but steadily changing how kitchens functions in many villages of rural Sindh.

“This new stove makes cooking much easier for women. At the same time they can cook on two pots with the same quantity of wood burning required for one pot. Since the stove is constructed on a raised platform, it prevents small children from coming close to the fire or hot pots. Thus, there is much demand for this stove and our business is growing. Initially, we were getting orders from nearby villages only. Gradually, we started getting orders from villages from other districts too. We have now gone to neighbouring districts of Tando Allah Yar and as far as Omar Kot district to construct this stove,” Kanji explained. This additional income has brought prosperity to their respective families of these men. Now, their children go to school and they have food security as well.



The fruits of labour

Flood waters destroyed homes and belongings of many villagers outside the Mirpurkhas city. The most affected were those farm workers who did not have their own lands. Families of Ganga and Shiva, two neighbours, also experienced the same hardship and lost their homes. Both families had to rebuild their lives from scratch, along with other villagers. However, this time these women wanted to do something to earn an income for their families as well.

One day two strangers, a woman and a man, came to their village and talked about how women can earn an income from the comfort of their homes. Both Ganga and Shiva were quite interested and excited to learn about this. Soon they learnt that both these strangers work for ILO's partner organization NRSP that provide micro credit to women to start earning.

Ganga has six children, five boys and a girl, and her elder son is 19 years old. She took out a loan of PKR10,000 (\$100) to start a small shop and also engaged her elder son to manage the shop. She learnt how to manage the shop inventory and proceeds. The shop caters to the daily consumable needs of the village and is now a successful business and she makes PKR200 (\$2) on a day. She paid her monthly instalment on a timely basis and returned the loan. Subsequently, Ganga took another small loan and bought a goat, and is hoping to sell and double the investment at PKR12,000 (\$120).

"I am happy that I can generate an income, and my son also helps me manage the shop," said a content Ganga."



Nascent hopes

The story of Shivan also has the same message of women's economic empowerment. She is the mother of four girls and two sons. A pleasant and a talkative lady in her late thirties, she said, "I am so happy that those two strangers visited us. First we were suspicious, but when the women explained the loan scheme for women, I was very happy to find an opportunity to earn money (through ILO's partner organization NRSP). I took out a loan of PKR10,000 (\$100) and bought two baby goats. Look at them, both of them are now all grown up and will fetch me at least PKR29,000 (\$290)," said Shivan with much joy in her voice. This new found ability to earn income has given a lot of confidence to Shivan.

When FAO team visited the village and offered them the new skill to teach kitchen gardening, these women were more than happy to learn it. Both Ganga and Shivan like many other women in the village learnt the techniques of kitchen gardening. "I grow my own vegetables in the courtyard. Now, I seldom need to buy vegetable from the market. This is very rewarding, in fact I even sell surplus vegetables. We also bought

poultry and I raise them too," shared Shivan. Post floods, the interventions made by ILO and FAO has quietly transformed the village by enabling the women to start earning income to ensure food security for their families. The positive effects of these empowering interventions were visible on the faces of these women and in their banter and laughter.



A young entrepreneur and his journey to success

Rizwan, 25 years old, runs his own shop in the small market of village Daulat Laghari. He sells computer CD of movies, soft drinks, snacks, and a variety of electric accessories, and charges customers for transferring new songs on their USBs. Rizwan has a computer and internet at his shop and charges people to send emails or use other internet services. "My business is new but I am already making a profit of PKR16,000 (\$160) a month," explained Rizwan. He is one of the flood affected youths who gained off-farm skills training in a computer course under a project of ILO. Rizwan has completed his intermediate education and belongs to an agricultural family.

The floods affected their family as income from the farm diminished. For him, it was a tough period as he saw the family struggling with limited income. It was extremely depressing for him as he could not find any employment opportunity to help his family.

"My teacher informed me about the start of an ILO programme in our village to train youth in computer skills. He asked me to immediately get enrolled. I am glad that I took his advice and completed the computer training course. During the training, I was also exposed to different ways of earning an income. I decided to somehow start my own shop where I could sell both



consumables and also charge for computer related services. Here I am in my own shop and making my own future. The fear of floods coming again does not haunt me, as my shop income will prevent my family from experiencing the difficulties that we did last time," Rizwan said with a determined look in his eyes.

The ILO through its partner has provided off-farm skills training to several youth in Mirpurkhas district of Sindh. These skills have enabled the youth to start their small businesses or become self-employed. These off-farm skills have enabled the flood affected families to diversify their income as opposed to relying on their farms. Rizwan is one such example as sources of his family income now include both on-farm and off-farm economic activities.



A master of his craft

The 50 kilometre long narrow bumpy road to village Bero Khan Gadehi has one market which caters to several villages scattered alongside this road. The road runs along a small irrigation canal for some time before it swirls and connects with the main Dadu-Hyderabad highway. In 2010, this canal brought in flood waters that swept away entire villages destroying houses and affecting hundreds of people. However, now, villages have been restored and the market and businesses are prospering.

The only tailoring shop in the market is managed by Muhammad Hanif, a 35 years-old man, and his four workers. His shop is thriving as everyone is busy cutting cloth or stitching cloth

pieces together. Hanif started this shop less than one year ago and before he did this, he was a daily wage labourer. Post floods events changed Hanif's life and exponentially increased his monthly income from a mere PKR10,000 (\$100) to a staggering PKR100,000 (\$1,000).

The floods affected Muhammad Hanif severely as he became unemployed and his family was exposed to hardship. He lives in a joint/extended family system and has the responsibility to take care for a family of ten, including one son and three young daughters of his own. With middle school education and no skills, his work as a labourer would earn PKR10,000 (\$100) monthly to support his large family.



Despite being unemployed and frustrated, Hanif kept looking for ways to improve his skills and be able to earn more income. When he heard that the ILO had started tailoring classes for flood affected families, he decided it was his moment to change his career. He eagerly took the opportunity, and thoroughly enjoyed the tailoring course. "It was according to my aptitude and I enjoyed each lesson. I loved the sewing machine and quickly mastered both cutting and stitching of gents' shalwaar qameez (suits). At the time of graduation, I was given a sewing machine, a tool kit and a certificate. I decided to open my own shop. After a few initial setbacks, the business ran smoothly. My friendly nature and quality of my work rapidly expanded my client base. There is not much competition in the market either so that helps. Initially, I used to do both cutting and stitching and my monthly income touched PKR20,000 (\$200). Moreover, my current job doesn't end up leaving my clothes soiled and my clients' give me respect and call me 'Ustaad Gee' (master craftsman) and it feels great too," shared Hanif with enthusiasm and a broad smile on his face.

Three months into the business of tailoring, Hanif's clientele kept increasing. To keep up with the demand he first hired one worker and now has four workers to help him stitch suits for men. He charges PKR350 (\$3.5) for stitching one suit and now completes ten suits a day. Hanif gives PKR100 (\$1) to his workers per suite, and each of his workers earn around PKR12,000 (\$120) monthly.

"This month the Eid (annual Muslim festival season) rush has further increased the stitching orders. With daily orders of more than ten suits, my monthly income will be more than PKR100,000 (\$1,000). Honestly, I never even dreamt that my monthly income would be this much," a visibly happy Hanif said.

Hanif is already on the road to success. He is not only earning a good amount of money but has also generated employment for the youth in his neighbourhood. The ILO and its project partner have helped advance the capacity of many

families to earn better incomes in the target villages of District Dadu. The fraternal relationship that exists among Hanif and his workers indicate small interventions can transform livelihoods of several people. The increased income ensures food security of not only Hanif's family but also the families of his four workers.



A diamond in the rough

Ahmed Khan would not stop smiling while recalling his road to recovery from the effects of the floods. "I used to earn little from my small farm and as wage labourer, but after the floods FAO friends came and taught me new ways to cultivate or rather multi-cultivate. From the last crop I have earned PKR175,000 (\$1,750) which is three times than what I used to earn," smiled Ahmed. Sitting under a tree in the large courtyard of his house, Ahmed appeared happy and content with his new learnt agricultural techniques to earn better money. He heads a family of 12 that include his wife Ayesha, children and sisters and he is responsible for their wellbeing.

"We did not pay much attention to the floods warning that the government kept announcing on the radio. The elders would say floods might not affect the village. One night, panic spread as news of heavy flood waters entering the nearby villages reached us. Flood water also destroyed houses in our village and mine got damaged and structure of our village mosque was almost destroyed. I barely managed to save my family and left this house in panic," recalled Ahmed.

The 2010 floods, affected hundreds of villages in district Dadu, Sindh, like Ahmed's village Gharo, destroying farms and houses and displacing millions of people. After the floods, the rebuilding process was slow and painful for many. Village Gharo got selected by LRP Project, where farmers groups were formed to educate them about new farming and cultivation techniques to gain higher yields and better incomes. "I was excited to learn many new agriculture methods that were never heard of before. Several farmers in the group were reluctant to implement these new techniques. I was among those who started following them and received 100 per cent good results. On their (FAO) advice I cultivated five vegetables together like English bitter gourd, voltori, coriander, tomatoes, and okra and reaped the benefits. Growing multiple vegetables rendered better profits through sales. I also managed monthly savings of PKR17,000 (\$170) as we used these vegetables for our food too," Ahmed smiled while narrating his success.

FAO's Farmers School taught the farmers how to use organic material as pesticide. Ahmed also revealed his new learnt techniques for better



crop yields: "I started using leaves of neem tree as pesticide, applying the technique of mulching (spreading bush leaves on crop to conserve soil moisture), made ridges that required less water to irrigate than simple flooding the field. I now collect and use cow dung as fertilizer instead of Urea for my crop. Using these techniques, per acre yield of my wheat crop has increased 50 per cent - from 30 to 35 munds per acre to 60 munds per acre."

There were other farmers in the village Gharo who started using these new techniques. Many of these farmers were not in the FAO run Farmers' School. However, these farmers were impressed with the success of Ahmed's application of new agricultural and farm

techniques. Ahmed is a happy man as his new acquired knowledge has not only increased his agricultural yield, but has also saved him money by his ability to use organic methods so that he no longer had to buy expensive chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

"I am glad that FAO taught us these new agricultural methods. Better crops bring me better money, which enables me to take good care of my family. We have seen hard times due to the devastation of floods. But now my income is good, my wife also contributes through her stitching skills and earn money. Now we are not worried about the food security of our family," shared a very self-assured Ahmed."

Small steps and new beginnings

Ayesha is the wife of Ahmed Khan, and her youngest son is two years old. Even though she remains busy with the care of her young child, she is committed to her role as someone who wants to earn for her family. "I knew some basic stitching, but learnt new ways in ILO organized stitching classes in our village. My cloth cutting, designing, and embellishment has now improved. I used to earn PKR5,000 (\$50) a month with my stitching. Now, I charge clients PKR500 (\$5) per fancy ladies suits, and now my monthly income is almost PKR10,000 (\$100) – double of what it was," a camera shy Ayesha shared. Ayesha was part of those women in Dadu district who benefitted from ILO's organized skills training programme.

"We learnt new ideas as well to improve our lives such as the importance of washing hands, advice on pregnancy, and the benefits of clean cooking. We also learnt more about the rights of girls and the importance of education for both girls and boys. My girls go to school too," Ayesha sounded wise. She was also part of women group trainings organized by UN Women. Both ILO and UN Women ran their programmes to empower women through skills training and awareness respectively.

The family of Ahmed Khan and Ayesha is one of many floods affected families in Dadu District that improved its food security due to joint efforts of three UN Agencies – FAO, ILO and UN Women.



An enlightened life

Zahid Hussain, sat comfortably along with his two sisters, Shahida Parveen and Zahida Parveen, while sharing his success story of recovering from the effects of the floods that devastated his family. "Flood water entered our house and destroyed our belongings severely damaging two rooms. Many houses in our village Loolja and in the Dadu district were destroyed. Those were difficult times, as I had to take care of my family and sisters. Rebuilding everything was not easy especially when my income from my small farm was not enough. When FAO started the Farmers' School to teach new cultivation techniques, I got myself enrolled. With new acquired agricultural knowledge, I was able to grow three crops, watermelon, sunflower and maize at the same time. The results were excellent, as the sale of three crops' yield from my small piece of land, one after the other, brought me PKR146,000 (\$1,460)," Zahid explained.

This family had a better level of education in their village. Zahid and his two sisters had completed high school education and were quite resourceful in learning new ways to increase their

family income. "I learnt with eagerness about the new cultivation methods that were taught at the FAO's Farmers School and applied those too. We typically face scarcity of water and the ridges method of field preparation taught us how to get maximum benefits with less water. Mulching (spreading bush leaves on farm) helped in keeping the soil moisturised and it reduced water evaporation. Ridges also allowed cultivation of three crops at the same time. In our village, and even in this area, these were novel ideas on how to cultivate. I have benefitted immensely with this new knowledge," smiled Zahid while sharing his views.

Zahid's new cultivation techniques have impressed many of his neighbours. They now visit Zahid to learn more about how he did it, and some of his neighbours have already started following his example to get better crop yields. "I have also benefited from the ILO course on how to sell my crop better," Zahid further shared. ILO has offered its programme of KAB to farmers in the area to help them harness their marketing and selling skills. "This increased income has enabled me to reconstruct my house.



This time, I have ensured that the building structure is strong and can withstand floods if it hits us again. I have learnt new agricultural skills and how to sell my crop for better income.

Certainly, this has made us more secure and ensured our food security. Moreover, my sisters have learnt kitchen gardening, which is wonderful," Zahid said proudly.

Kitchen gardening: A novel idea



Shahida is married and has a 10 year old daughter and a 5 year old son. She lives with her brother Zahid. Her daughter is studying in fourth grade at the village school. Abida, Zahid's younger sister, is single and is to be married next year. Both sisters enjoy kitchen gardening – a concept that was alien in this area. "We never heard about kitchen gardening. After the floods, the FAO started teaching women in our village how to cultivate vegetables for home consumption. We both were curious and got ourselves enrolled. They taught us about seeds, vegetables, using neem leaves as pesticide, about the different qualities of soils, using cow dung as fertilizer and how to cultivate vegetables. This all was very exciting," Shahida said with a sense of excitement.

"Our brother was very intrigued when I used to share my new acquired knowledge about soil,

pesticides and fertilizers and how to grow vegetables," smiled Abida while looking at her brother. "I have grown many vegetables like spinach, turnips, carrots, and tomatoes. It is fun growing vegetables and then cooking them," Abida continued.

Both sisters sell the surplus vegetables in the village. Shahida said, "Women come to us and buy fresh vegetables. I never realized that from kitchen gardening one can cook and earn money at the same time. This is so helpful."

UN Women has also introduced programmes for the empowerment of women and both sisters also benefitted. "They taught us about the value of investing in girls' education. Giving equal rights to both boys and girls. My daughter goes to school and now she is in fourth grade. They also taught us the importance of washing hands and maintaining hygiene," shared Shahida.

These new skills of kitchen gardening and knowledge about rights has clearly made both the sisters quite confident. Their liveliness and ability to contribute to the family income has enhanced their status within the house. "We are so thankful to FAO and UN Women for teaching us new things and making us feel more confident. Through kitchen gardening both of us ensure that we have good healthy meals every day," concluded Shahida.



Rebuilding flood affected farmers' communities:

Inspirational human stories

This collection of inspirational success stories is a journey that begins with the life changing effects on a few unsuspecting individuals of the catastrophic floods in 2010 in Sindh Pakistan, and ends with the transformation of their lives, by the positive intervention of joint efforts by three UN agencies – the International Labour Organisation, UN Women and Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. When all hope was lost and homes and farmlands were ravaged by the floods, the communities that lived in the worst affected areas were left destitute, homeless and hungry. With no food security and mouths to feed men and women alike were desperate to find new and innovative ways to make money and earn a livelihood. The opportunities afforded to them by the project "Livelihood Restoration, Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in Sindh province," has meant that women have become empowered gaining independence and entrepreneurial skills and men and women have started thriving businesses of their own. These case studies will shed light on how families have risen from the depths of depravity to great heights of success and are testament to the bravery and courage of the people of interior Sindh, who have managed to use their new skills to begin a new and fruitful life ensuring prosperity for their future generations.

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