
Paper for submission to the USAID Workshop to follow the International Food and Agribusiness Management Meeting in Chicago 27-30 June, 2005

Title: *Strengthening of Cross-Border Relationships: Pakistan-Afghanistan*

Country: PAKISTAN

Authors: Abdul Qayyum Khan and Anwar F. Chishti

Problem Statement

Since reopening of the USAID Mission in Pakistan in 2002, one of its focuses has been on strengthening Pakistan's capacity to combat terrorism. USAID's programs in Pakistan included governance, investment in people and economic freedom. Pakistan's total population is 148.4 million with an annual growth rate of 2.4 percent. Sixty-six percent of the total population lives in the rural area. Forty-eight million rural and urban people representing 33 percent of the total population live below the poverty line. Eighty-seven percent of the rural population has access to clean water. Fertility rate is 4.68 births per woman. Under five years mortality rate per 1000 live births is 110.3. Eight percent of the total labor force of 43.5 million is unemployed. Forty percent of the unemployed labor force are young people between the ages of 15 and 20 years with limited marketable skills and little prospect of meaningful employment. The agriculture sector alone employs 42% of the employed labor force. Economic growth remains slow and gross national per capita income is US\$470. Education is the biggest challenge in Pakistan. High student/teacher ratios, averaging 55 to 1, contribute to the poor quality of education offered. Only 44 percent of girls are enrolled at the primary level, while boys' participation rate is 56%. The drop-out rate during the first five years is 70 percent. Illiteracy is extremely high, particularly among females, where it is 72 percent. Among males, illiteracy is 43 percent. Lack of access to skill building, quality education is a major factor in the high rate of youth unemployment. The low level of education and high unemployment rate is a source of instability both in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Objectives

In order to strengthen Pakistan's capacity to combat cross-border terrorism the USAID has focused on the following programs:

1. Improvement in health care for women and children.
2. Improvement in quality of education offered at the primary, secondary and University levels.
3. Facilitate economic growth through focusing on the most economically disadvantaged, specially those in rural areas by expanding micro-

finance programs and services that help small and medium-sized businesses. In addition, the USAID has made cash transfers to the Government of Pakistan to reduce debt burden.

4. Improvements in governance through helping civil society foster more effective and responsive local governance through fact-based and issue oriented source of public information on political, economic and social issues.
5. Strengthening of cross-border relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan through reconstruction of the agriculture and education sectors of Afghanistan.

This paper details the approach cited in paragraph 5 above.

Procedures

Improvement in relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan is critical to combat cross-border terrorism. The USAID/Pakistan's support to strengthen NWFP Agricultural University to develop person to person linkages through transfer of agricultural technology will strengthen good-will and friendly relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which would reduce the threat of terrorism in the region. The following procedures to develop person to person and institutional linkages between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been and will continue to be adopted:

1. Organized short courses for transfer of technology to Afghanistan
2. Twinning of Pakistan-Afghanistan Agricultural Research Institutions and Scientists.
3. Preparation of Training Manuals for Master Trainers
4. Enhancement of English Language Skills of Long-term Degree Training participants.
5. Provision of text-books written by Pakistani scientists to Agricultural Faculties of Afghan Universities
6. Support the Teaching Program at Kabul University and other initiatives.
7. Development of International Programs and Services

Organized Short Courses

Organized short courses of four weeks duration each serving twenty participants, have and will continue to focus on imparting of technical knowledge in post harvest management and marketing skills, integrated pest management, animal nutrition, animal health, poultry husbandry and management, teaching methodology and communications skills, soil management, training of trainers in sustainable use of water, orchard and nursery management, preservation of fruits and vegetables, women enterprises (mushroom cultivation, poultry management and preservation of fruits and vegetables), enterprise development and management skills and extension methodology and technology transfer. These short courses have added and will continue to add value to endowment skills of Afghan participants. The participants who have enhanced their skills endowment in agricultural technology have represented the Universities of Kabul, Nangarhar, Kandhar, Alberuni, Balkh, Herat and Takhar, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Environment, Non-Governmental Organizations including Mercy Corps, IRC, German Agro Action, Medera, AHDAA, GOAL, COOPI, ACTED and CARE. The participants from the Universities of Afghanistan have started to translate the values added to their knowledge endowment into their teaching materials. Participants from other organizations are using their enhanced skills to the extent possible by available opportunities or facilities.

Preparation of Training Manuals

The training manuals for different disciplines taught in organized short courses have or are being prepared in English and are also translated into Pashto and Dari languages for wider distribution for use by Master Trainers in Afghanistan.

Twinning of Pakistan-Afghanistan Agricultural Research Institutions/Scientists

The “twinning” concept has been used and will continue to be used to link selected research stations in Afghanistan with appropriate research stations and institutes in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Under this program, research scientists from research institutes/stations will work in different commodities and disciplines with their counterparts at 12 research stations in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. This twinning program will also allow Pakistani teachers and researchers

to visit their counterparts at different research stations in Afghanistan including Sheshambagh research institute at Jalalabad and Darul Amaan research institute at Kabul. This program will be extended in years to come to other agricultural research stations of Afghanistan. The “twinning” consists of specialized individual practical training programs of about two weeks duration, with Pakistani and Afghan scientist-to-scientist collaboration developing from these research station linkages.

Enhancement of English Language Skills

The long-term degree program participants from Afghanistan who are currently enrolled and those who will be enrolled in the future at NWFP Agricultural University are deficient in English Language as the principal mode of teaching in Afghanistan Universities is in Dari language. All of the long-term degree participants enrolled at NWFP Agricultural University will undergo English Language training, which will strengthen their English Language capability and will prepare them for TOEFL examinations required for possible future enhancement of their educational levels.

Provision of Textbooks

Eight textbooks written by Pakistani teachers and researchers in different disciplines of agriculture technology including Animal Husbandry, Crop Production, Horticulture, Extension, Plant Pathology, Plant Breeding, Soil Science Management etc. These textbooks written by Pakistani authors with support by USAID Pakistan are in local context and include examples from local conditions. These books currently in short supply will be republished and delivered to different Agricultural Educational institutions in Afghanistan as a part of a support to strengthen the teaching programs at Afghanistan Agricultural Educational institutions. These textbooks will add value to the teaching resource of Afghanistan agricultural educational institutions.

Support to Teaching Program at Kabul University

Kabul University is the lead University of Afghanistan and its Faculty of Agriculture has been playing a major role in supporting agricultural teaching programs at different Universities of Afghanistan through provision of curriculum materials and teaching support as and when needed. The majority of the faculty of Kabul University have only Bachelor Degrees in their field of specialization and are engaged in teaching bachelor students. Five members of the Faculty have been

enrolled at NWFP Agricultural University in Master Degree Programs in different disciplines. The twenty-three years old curriculum taught primarily by bachelor faculty has, in-fact, resulted in a low quality of graduates. To support the teaching program at Kabul University, two existing or recently retired Ph.D faculty members from NWFP Agricultural University system originally trained in the U.S will teach courses for one semester each at Kabul University as Visiting Professors. This will add value to the curriculum improvement and teaching program of the Faculty of Agriculture of Kabul University.

International Programs and Services

The Office of International Programs and Services to be organized and established at the NWFP Agricultural University will coordinate, develop, establish and administer institutional linkages with the Universities of Afghanistan and other entities in the region to assist the NWFP-AU in playing its role as a Center of Excellence in the region. The Office of International Programs and Services will also provide educational services to the international student community.

Expected Results

- Two hundred and thirty participants including 22 women from Afghanistan have been trained within the past fifteen months in different disciplines of agricultural technology and a similar number will be trained this year. The trained participants from Universities have realized the value of the short-term training program and have translated the enhanced skills and materials to their teaching programs at the University level. The participants from the Ministries and NGOs are using their enhanced skills in their individual programs.
- Training Manuals for Master Trainers have been prepared to date in Sustainable Use of Water Resources in English, Irrigation Practices for Agronomists in Pashto, Preservation of Fruits and Vegetables in English and Dari Languages. Training Manuals in Extension Methodology and Technology Transfer, Post-Harvest Management and Marketing Skills and Enterprise Development and Management Skills are under process. Manuals in other disciplines will be prepared in due course of time.

-
- Ten and more, if resources are available, M.S. participants will be trained in English Language to become effective professional in their discipline.
 - 1000 Textbooks, across eight disciplines in agriculture will be provided to Agricultural Educational Institutions of Pakistan and Afghanistan to enhance their teaching resource endowment.
 - Teaching program at the Faculty of Agriculture, Kabul University will be strengthened by providing two Visiting Professors from NWFP Agricultural University System.