



NGO IN CONSULTATIVE STATUS
WITH THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL OF
THE UNITED NATIONS
(ECOSOC)

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEADS TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Poverty is a terrible disease because it attacks humans' self-respect and dignity. Hunger, illiteracy, poor health and lack of clean drinking water are only the symptoms. The root cause of the disease is much deeper with long-range and devastating consequences on the development of the individual, community and a nation as a whole. Poverty breeds crimes, violence and other evils. Poverty, as we all know, is indelibly linked to lack of control over resources, including land, skills, capital, knowledge etc. It poses the gravest threat to political stability, social cohesion and environmental health of the people. Poverty normally has the effect of narrowing the horizons of possibility. It saps energy not only for physical work, but also for opening the mind to opportunities.

The population of Pakistan is 149 million and about 68% of this population lives in the rural areas of Pakistan. The labor force is over 42.75 million of which 3.34 million are unemployed. Unemployment in the rural areas, which was 5.0% in 1998, has risen to 6.94% in 2003. Pakistan at present is under tremendous pressure of rapidly growing population and fast increasing labor force. Most of the surplus labor force comes from the marginal small farmers and land less laborers. Pakistan's poverty problem is concentrated in its 45000 villages. The real challenge to alleviate poverty therefore lies in the rural sector.

Pakistan's economy, security, solidarity and integrity is based on its rural sector which presents at present a dismal and gloomy picture of poverty-ill health, alarmingly low rate of literacy, malnutrition, high population growth, poor social and physical infrastructure, low production and productivity, unemployment, absence of people's institutions and massive exploitation and abuse of poor by feudal land lords and petty government officials.

Rural development is a colossal challenge. No government, ever affluent it may be can handle it without the participation and mobilization of human and material resources. This may require change in the power structure, adjustment or decentralization of the administrative system and creation of grass roots people's organizations backed up by full political commitment of government.

Development and meeting the basic needs of the people go together, and the development of human resources is the key to alleviate poverty. The objectives of development include sustained increase in per capita output and incomes, expansion of productive employment and greater distribution of benefits of growth. This implies reducing poverty and human misery by increasing the productivity of the poor and providing them greater access to goods and services. A major conceptual advance in development strategies is to view social and economic development as a single unifying process involving consideration of both social and economic aspects and aimed at the achievement of overall integrated development objectives.

The growing interest in poverty alleviation in recent years has resulted in rethinking the whole concept of rural development. Instead of concentrating on development through governmental agencies a new emphasis on development through non- governmental organizations (NGOs) has emerged.

The role of NGO has been recognized throughout the world. Therefore, it is imperative that NGOs should be encouraged by the government and get fully involved in planning and implementation of projects at grass roots level, where the government machinery is not functioning to create the desired impact to reduce poverty so that the rural poor can be pushed out of the poverty syndrome.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION OF PAKISTAN (RDF) **Field Activities June 2003 to March 2004**

STRENGTHENING OF MEMBER NGOS NETWORK

After extensive hard work, the foundation has been successful in forming a nation wide network of more than 200 NGOs/CBOs, participating in RDF's efforts towards rural development and poverty alleviation at national level.

RDF-NGO MICRO CREDIT PROGRAM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

RDF in an attempt to alleviate poverty launched a micro-credit program in collaboration with its field NGOs in Pakistan. The salient features of this micro credit program is sanctioning a matching grant by RDF to field NGOs who will act as operational arm in the field and identify the beneficiaries with emphasis on women in development, small entrepreneurs and farmers preferably in the ratio of 33% each. RDF has launched a revolving fund in few villages in which loans are advanced after thorough scrutiny to poor farmers, landless women and youth for agriculture, forestry, livestock, fisheries, fertilizers, small irrigation schemes, cottage and small industries and other income generating projects. Village Development Committees (VDC's) are made responsible to act as an institution for select of deserving cases for such loans.

RDF has provided matching grants of Rs. 50,000/- without markup to its member NGOs such as Yasir Welfare Society Khanewal, Al-Mustafa Welfare Association Dubi Tehsil Mir Wah District Khairpur sindh & Frontier Reconstruction Agency Bannu NWFP with the condition that they will contribute the same amount of money for its micro credit programme. The local NGOs are authorized to charge 5% for their overhead expenses. This amount will be revolved for further credits after the initial recovery. The programme is a great success and up till now some 34 beneficiaries including 22% females are being benefited in this programme. Moreover, RDF while selecting the field NGOs has given due representation to all the provinces of Pakistan. Some more cases for "RDF-NGO Micro Credit Programme" from other area are under process.

FOOD SECURITY PROJECT OF SMALL FARMERS BY INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION

Food Security is a project initiated by Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) with the objective to assess food security at the house hold and community level as basis for community- level planning and action and for national and regional monitoring of World food summit (WFS) commitments.

Rural Development Foundation of Pakistan (RDF) Islamabad has been selected as a focal point in Pakistan to carry out the above project among other South Asian, South East Asian and East Asian countries. RDF for this, selected 20 villages through its national network of community based NGOs through out Pakistan and compiled a comprehensive house hold survey of 20 villages (600 Households) according to the guidelines proposed by ANGOC and thus completed phase I of the project.

The cost of this project is Rs. 5625060 i.e \$96983.8 in which the share of the community /NGO is Rs. 3937542 i.e. 67888.5 US\$. Presently, the project has been sent to international donors through ANGOC for necessary funding while the share of the donor is 30% i.e Rs. 1687518/US \$29095.3

RENOVATION AND BRICK LINING OF WATER COURSE NO 57484

The project aims at strengthening of water user community of small farmers in communal irrigation, sustainable and judicious water management. Moreover, the project approach is participatory. The total cost of the project is Rs. 2,483,800=Euro 37,064.17, in which the sharing contribution from the community is about 20% i.e Rs. 496760=Euro 7414.3 of the total cost of the scheme. 5% of the total cost i.e. Rs. 1,24,190=Euro 1,853.5 is contributed by NGO on account of social mobilization and general supervisions while executing the scheme. The donor share in this project is 75% i.e. Rs. 1,862,850=Euro 27,803.7 RDF is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the project through its field NGOs at grassroots level.

PARTICIPATION OF RDF IN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL MEETINGS/SEMINARS

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) organized the forty sixth session of the commission on "Narcotic Drugs" held at Geneva Center from March 21 to March 28, 2004 followed by a Ministerial-level Segment of the Commission. Mr. Mohammad Shoaib represented RDF.

A forum was held in Islamabad on June 10, 2003 on "Pakistan Campaign to Ban Landmines" organized by DESCON. Mr. S.M Asim attended the forum. The havoc played by landmines in tribal areas of Pakistan adjoining Afghanistan border and different areas of Afghanistan during Russian-Afghan war was discussed in which presentations on some cases were also made. Other officials of local and foreign missions /delegates in Islamabad also attended the forum.

Review and planning workshop on "Gender Governance Intervention" was held on June 11, 2003 at Lahore organized by the Election Commission of Pakistan and UNDP in collaboration with NGOs. The workshop reviewed the role of NGOs in creating political awareness among the masses to help and streamline the process of electoral role in Pakistan. Mr. S.M. Asim who joined the deliberation of the forum at Lahore represented RDF.

A one week training programme on "Poverty Alleviation through Micro financing" was held from August 4-13, 2003 at National center for Rural Development. Ms. Shamaila Hamayun represented RDF. The main aim of the training program was to equip the participants belonging to local governments and corporate sector with the knowledge of micro financing and how it can be useful for the poor people in order to generate sustainable income.

PILOT PROJECT GODHO

Godho is a village located 37 miles Northwest of Islamabad near historical place of Pakistan, Taxilla. It consists of 205 households having 53.3% males & 46.5% females. RDF launched a Skill Training project in the area in 1984. In order to improve the quality of life of the poor people RDF carried out different intervention like women development, health, education and infrastructure improvement in collaboration with the government line agencies, UNICEF, Friedrich Neuman Foundation and local VDC. The project was closed due to lack of resources. During 2004 RDF has reinitiated a multi-sectoral program in the area in close collaboration with VDCs. The program will mainly include following segments:

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

FAMILY HEALTH CARE CENTER

Family Health Care Center will be started in collaboration with Pakistan Health And Education Foundation (PHAEF).

INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (IRDS)

The institute of Rural Development Studies (IRDS) regularly organizes training and internship courses on NGO Capacity Building and rural Development. The primary focus of capacity building is to improve the ability of NGOs to focus on improving their internal management and organizational effectiveness, their financial management and reporting system and their efficiency in increasing and using resources for specific projects. Following are the courses that were offered for NGOs and students.

1. SIXTH NGO MANAGEMENT COURSE

Sixth NGO management course of one week was organized in 2003 wherein participants from RDF member NGOs network participated in the course. The main objective of this training was to increase the management capacity of NGO's Volunteers in order to enable them to manage the functions of NGOs/CBOs working in remote areas of Pakistan.

2. RDF INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Unemployment has now been considered as one of the top-ranked problems in our society, therefore, RDF in order to increase the capacity of unemployed graduates held an internship program in 2003 & 2004 where by four batches of unemployed male/female graduates were trained for future employment/self-employment. This internship program is for a period of two months. In addition to the training on different rural development aspects like micro enterprise, poverty alleviation, project proposal-writing etc., the interns were provided a stipend of Rs. 2,000/-per month.

CONSTRUCTION OF RDF CENTER WESTERN BLOCK

RDF has entered into an agreement with Pakistan Health And Education Foundation regarding construction of RDF Center Western Block. The agreement worth Rs. 25 million has been signed on January 21, 2004.

RDF Staff Appointment

1. Mr. Khurram Riaz has joined RDF as its Executive Director. Before Joining RDF he has worked in different national and international NGOs like NRSP, IUCN & FPAP.
2. Mrs. Samira Afzal Bukhari has joined RDF as Training and program Officer.
3. Mr. Qasim Mahmood has joined RDF as Account Officer.
4. Mr Gul Nawaz has joined RDF as Office Superintendent

ANGOC GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

ANGOC is turning 25th this year. The meeting will be organized at Manila, Philippines on July 18-24, 2004.

Training Course on Community Mobilization

RDF is announcing a 6-day training course from June 21-25, 2004, which will enable the participants to learn the basics of social organization and community mobilization.

Training Course on Leadership Training for Managers May 11-13, 2004

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Condolence:

We announce with great regret the sad demise of Major General @Rao Farman Ali Khan, the Chairman of RDF. We pray that God Al-Mighty in his infinite mercy blessed the departed soul! Amin