

Significance of Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are integral parts of MEDA's Pakistan program management cycle. MEDA Pakistan M&E Section, among other support sections, enjoys a central position because of its support to management in project designing. Equipped with all essential skills and capacity in project designing, research, monitoring, evaluation, review, data management, the M&E section has kept on enriching the quality of interventions through their continuous feedback to management and implementing partners. This facilitates efficient management of the outcomes and outputs of various on-going projects. Currently, the M&E Section through its monitoring activities: a) captures documents and analyzes quantitative

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M&E team member applying assessment tools in the field.

USAID Pakistan Entrepreneurs

The project is working to increase the incomes of Pakistani micro-entrepreneurs and small enterprise owners, with a strong emphasis on women as target beneficiaries. A key aspect of this goal is to engender an institutional capacity amongst key local NGOs, training institutions and private sector players to significantly scale up operations and bring market-driven principles to their interaction with micro and small enterprises. The project will focus on micro-enterprises in twelve value chains, and will double incomes (on average) Based on signature value chain models, and self-sustaining and replicating methodologies, the rural and urban value chains are projected to diversify and grow beyond the life of the project. To increase incomes of targeted beneficiaries, USAID Pakistan Entrepreneurs will link small and micro entrepreneurs to viable markets for sustained growth.

Update on activities

The first step is careful selection of value chains that provide opportunity for micro entrepreneurs. This selection is being based on a series of value chain assessments that USAID Pakistan Entrepreneurs conducted during September and October. Several study teams analyzed selected value chains on dried fruit, ceramics, hand-made carpets, solar energy, water purification, herbs, spices and honey. The resulting assessment reports will provide the foundation for designing project interventions.

USAID Pakistan Entrepreneurs will start rolling out grants over the coming months for selected value chains with local partners. In the meantime, teams from USAID Pakistan

Entrepreneurs are also carrying out institutional assessments of Pakistani organizations, who a Potential partners for support to implement the value chain interventions under the USAID Pakistan Entrepreneurs project.

Training needs for women sales agents representing producers of embellished garments is also being looked at under this project and training modules are being developed. Market linkages for producers is a key part of the project and preliminary work has been started to identify and build stronger channels.

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information/data on Performance Measurement Framework indicators and against performance targets; b) verifies the reported progress and processes achieved against targeted activities; c) captures the immediate effects and changes caused by the project interventions and activities on the targeted communities, institutions and organizations.

The evaluation process involves extensive surveys and focus group discussions for establishing project baseline facts and figures and on periodic basis for assessments and reviews. More specifically, our M&E objectives from these evaluation exercises are to improve the design and performance of ongoing projects and make an overall judgment about the effectiveness, efficiency sustainability, relevance, and impact of a completed project. The exercise also generates knowledge about best practices.

Regular reporting updates management on progress against targets, any significant changes, studies of unique

M&E in a nutshell

- Monitoring and tracking projects' progress
- Identify and share best practices and lessons learned
- Evaluating projects' impact against outcomes and outputs
- Continuous feedback to management for improvement in programmes
- Help management in project developing and improvement

Cases, comprehensive assessment ie baselines for effective and informed decision making and project management. Complying with its intended objectives, the M&E section has developed monitoring and evaluation systems for its CIDA and USAID supported projects and

monitored progress of the implementing partners on a regular basis. A baseline survey for establishing a foundation for project wide evaluations is the first critical step. Case studies are conducted and significant changes caused by project interventions are tracked. Another crucial role played by M&E colleagues is to build the capacity of its Pakistani partners for effective project monitoring and evaluation through classroom based trainings and on job practice.

MEDA Pakistan's M&E section also participates in MEDA HQ's global learning initiatives and contributes its knowledge on socio economic context and how regional knowledge could be incorporated in overall MEDA global strategy.

MEDA Pakistan's Annual Partners Conference

A time for reflection, an exchange of latest experiences - both challenges and successes, updates on current industry trends and best practices, information on strategies, issues, solutions, lessons, a celebration of the advancement of the microenterprise industry and a reassurance to each other that common problems and challenges can be overcome.

An exciting event which will be repeated in four selected cities in each province during February and March 2010.

For more details contact Aaliya Tahirkheli: atahirkheli@meda.org.pk

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting

Pathways & Pursestrings' fourth Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held at Haleeb Foods, Ltd. Bhai Pheru, Kasur in November, 2009. This annual event is held to bring together representatives from MEDA, the implementing agency and its Key Facilitating Partners (KFP), and the donor Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) on one forum to discuss the progress of the project.

CIDA's Program Monitor's report and semi-annual report were reviewed. Progress updates were presented by each Pathways & Pursestrings partner. During the course of the meeting the KFPs training needs were discussed along with MEDA's Annual Partners Conference scheduled to be held during February and March 2010.

The KFPs in value chains Dairy, Embellished Fabrics, Bangles, Seedlings and our capacity development KFP were represented by:

- Dr. Muhammad Zubair Ahmad, Haleeb Foods Ltd.
- Aysha Saifuddin of Kaarvan Crafts Foundation
- Ghaffar Sherani, Pakistan Social Welfare Society
- Masood ul Mulk and Zubair Anwar, Sarhad Rural Support Program, •Perveen Sheikh, ECDI

Farah Chandani, First Secretary Development from the Canadian High Commission and Rukhsana Rashid, CIDA Gender Advisor also participated in the proceedings. Special guests included Rachel Hess, Senior Consultant/Project Manager, and Kim Pityn, Director of International Operations both from MEDA HQ.



Khadija-tul-Qubra: Female Sales Agent takes the lead for change



'An initial passion for embellishment work, later became an economic necessity' - Khadija-tul-Qubra

Quaid-e- Millat, Chungi, Lahore is an urban setting where majority of the families are very poor. Most of the men are laborers and day-wagers. The women of these households have to deal with trying to meet their basic expenses from their men's limited income. Khadija-tul-Qubra, her husband, and two children a son, 10 and a daughter 7, are part of just such a joint family household.

Most of the women The skill of stitching, cutting, weaving, embroidery, sewing etc, these women stitch and embroider for their family members and neighbors and sometimes manage to earn small amounts of money for this work. Recognizing the worth of these women's skills to contribute in uplifting the economy of their households, MEDA Pakistan, in partnership with Kaarvan Crafts, has initiated the CIDA funded Pathways & PurseStrings Project in the area. Kaarvan Crafts is mobilizing and organizing these skilled women into productive groups, who will receive facilitation from Kaarvan Crafts in becoming viable business entities.

Acknowledging Khadija's rich expertise and exposure in this trade, the Kaarvan Crafts team motivated and helped her to form a group of women with interest in embellishment work. "From an early age, my passion and love for embellished work evolved out of my elder sister's apprenticeship at a local stitching centre" - Khadija has a two year diploma in cutting, stitching, traditional embroidery and home décor.

Being familiar with the scope and demand of business, she was able to motivate other women living in the area and formed a group which they called "Lassani Group" with 26 regular and 35 part-time members. Khadija became their Female Sales Agent. During her attachment with the project since April 2009, Khadija and almost all of the Lassani Group's regular members received orientation on various aspects of entrepreneurship. The Kaarvan Crafts Foundation team helped them in learning about contemporary dress designs, color combinations, quality parameters and profitable markets.

The collective efforts of the group, and with Kaarvan's guidance, Khadija managed to get a contract for an order of 120 shawls. This order was by completed by six mature and trained members of the group, on time and as per the desired quality. Appreciating the quality of work done by these women embellishers, the same contractor who was paying Rs.80 per piece is now paying Rs. 120 per piece. Lassani Group now receives orders of 500 shawls per month. Rightly observing that the shawls' order would last only for the winters, Khadija has successfully explored the option of working with boutiques and other fashion outlets.

"I am very happy as through this membership I have secured permanent work and also a sustainable source of income which I will spend on healthy food and quality education of my children, things I had been craving for". - a group member Khadija declared that group formation had strengthened them all and now they were a very skilled force and were able to get work on profitable rates. "The facilitation of Kaarvan Crafts in improving the design and quality of our work and developing market relations has enabled me to get work for my group members. Now, I am confident enough to negotiate with even large wholesalers to get contracts on reasonable profits and provide permanent work to my member embellishers" said Khadija. Khadija has attributed her success to the collective effort of women embellishers and to her husband who has always encouraged and believed in her ability.

Regional Women's Economic Network (RWEN)

RWEN provides a platform to promote business relationships among women associations for sustainable socio-economic advancement of poor women in three countries of the region. It's partner associations are: Association of Women Entrepreneurs in Small & Micro Enterprises (AWESOME, Pakistan), Afghan Women's Business Council (AWBC) and National Association of Business Women (NABWT, Tajikistan). The 4th meeting of RWEN members occurred in Dubai in October of '09. The meeting aims to provide an opportunity for members to share ideas for expanding their businesses in UAE's high value markets through direct access and interaction with potential buyers. The event constituted three main activities that included Classroom trainings in networking, importance of quality, efficiency, and innovation, and market research, a field trip to explore, identify, and create linkages in markets in Dubai.



The event also provided them with a sales opportunity through the third activity which was an exhibition of products from the three countries. Some even recorded commendable sales and received work orders. The women entrepreneurs understood the importance of quality, innovation and efficiency for product development. Participants from Pakistan paid a visit to the Pakistan Embassy for guidance on participating in the Dubai Festival. The Assistant Counselor was impressed by the enthusiasm and potential of these women and appreciated their efforts and offered helpful advice.

Capacity Development

October

- MEDA Pakistan has signed up an agreement with ECI to strengthen the capacity of WESS (Water, Environment and Sanitation Society) based in Balochistan under the FAO/USAID Livelihood project. For this, modules were developed on value chain theory and best practices, developing embellished garments value chain map, problem analysis, solution development, market research followed by developing program implementation. ECI conducted the training in Quetta. The trainees included staff of USABBA (United States Assistance to Agriculture in Balochistan Border Areas), WESS and MEDA. After receiving the training WESS Team has started conducting market research. ECI will continue to provide guidance to the Embellished Garments Value Chain Team in conducting market research and completion of the Value Chain Analysis report.
- Key Facilitating partners were supported in the finalization of their respective Gender and Environment Plans for Home-bound women in the Seedling, Embellished Garments, Dairy and Glass Bangle Subsectors. The Gender and Environment plans were reviewed to frame strategies for the respective Key Facilitating Partners to implement within the next four months.

December

- MEDA's KFP for capacity development, ECDI, conducted a three day training session on the topic 'Marketing for MSEs'. The participants were given orientation on understanding the markets, marketing tactics, advertising, distribution and promotional tactics. Hands on support was provided in developing market plans for their respective value chains of Glass Bangles, Dairy and Seedling subsector teams.

November

- Sophie Forbes, who is a Value Chain Finance (VCF) consultant, came from MEDA's Head Office to conduct a diagnostic review of the VCF action plans developed by the KFPs. She visited Haripur and Lahore to facilitate the development of tools for conducting in-depth interviews with finance service providers and clients. MEDA's Key Facilitating Partners (KFP) were also assisted in field testing the tools for conducting focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and mapping financial cash flows in their respective value chains. KFPs will now be able to develop their own VCF Work Plans however, MEDA Pakistan office continues to support the KFPs in the implementation of their VCF work plans. Further support will be provided in developing strategies for KFP clients' access to appropriate finance for investment in our selected value chains of bangles, crafts, seedlings and dairy.



Meet us at MEDA

Aaliya Tahirkheli is amongst MEDA Pakistan's pioneering staff members. A gender and development specialist, she works in program implementation at MEDA. Aaliya says that she has reached her current position by sheer grit and hard work. Her family's preference was for her to join the elite government civil services but she opted for a career in the development sector.

Aaliya hopes one day to be in a senior management position contributing to policy for women's empowerment. With an impressive educational background, she has a Masters in English Literature from the University of Punjab, and an M.Sc in Globalization & Development from IDPM, at the University of Manchester, UK and her years of diverse development experience we are sure she will get there.

Always cheerful and confident, she happily takes on additional responsibilities. For Aaliya the best part of working with MEDA is that the opportunities and challenges tune one to think out of the box. In her choice of hobbies too, Aaliya's distinct personality is reflected; she is a Reiki practitioner, loves sketching trees, likes traditional crafts, music and interacting with friends across all continents.

