



Social, Entrepreneurship & Equity Development

INCUBATING POTENTIAL PROGRAMME

Empowering the women in Balochistan through enterprise development

PROJECT REPORT





Executive Summary

The following report has been prepared with reference to project 'Incubating Potential Programme' (IPP), executed as a result of the collaboration between SEED and BRAC in Balochistan. The primary purpose of IPP was to develop the entrepreneurial skills and business acumen in Merchandisers, and to provide Business Orientation to the Artisans. The most important element of the project was that it was focused on the women of Balochistan, enabling them to understand the basics of entrepreneurship, and building their capacity to combine their skills with entrepreneurship at the grassroots level. This report will manifest the complete information of IPP project, its details and further discussion on the objectives.

The project report is the complete documentation of the overall execution of the project which includes training information of the sessions; it also gives a brief introduction of SEED and BRAC, and the partnership that resulted in this project as a pilot. The report incorporates the key accomplishments and challenges along with future recommendations based on the observations throughout the project.

The programme consisted of pre-training survey conducted by SEED team and facilitated by BRAC based on which, SEED developed the curriculum and related activities followed by three days of intensive on-ground training sessions in each district, described in detail in the latter part of the report.



Table of Contents

Programme Parameters	4
Introduction	5
Partner Organisations	5
Programme Details	6
Overview	7
Participant Profile	7
Pre-Project Survey & Curriculum Development	7
On-ground training sessions.....	7
Key Accomplishments	8
Key Challenges	9
On-ground Observations	9
Lessons Learned	9
Description of Beneficiaries	10
Recommendations	10
Conclusion	11
Testimonials	12
Snapshots.....	13



PROJECT PARAMETERS

Project Title	Incubating Potential Programme (IPP)
Affiliate Programme	Potential Enterprise Mapping Strategy (PEMS) by SEED
Project Lead	Sadaf Mahmood
Core Team	Shahmeer Ansari, Sohaib Jamil, Shaista Ayesha
Executed for:	BRAC
Project Duration	Three Months
Beneficiaries	40 female participants (Artisans group) 20 female and male participants (Merchandiser group)
Project Main Location	Winder – Shah Mir Goth Sakran - Community Center
Selected Areas	Sakran and Winder
Project Start Date	September, 2015
Project End Date	November, 2015



Background

Balochistan is the largest of all provinces in covered area along with highly rich in natural resources; however, lags behind the rest of Pakistan in terms of economic and social development due to various challenges. Balochistan mainly relies on agriculture but is unfortunate enough as the land is mostly barren and dry with chronic water scarcity and persistent droughts. Livestock rearing is one of the major occupations in the province with 73% of the population relying on it as a source of livelihood. Though 93% of the province is considered rangeland, overgrazing, water shortages and droughts often lead to loss of grazing land, thus, only 33% of the land can be considered reasonably productive grazing land. These factors provide a strong rationale for integrated development through building and strengthening local microenterprises and building the capacity of the aspiring entrepreneurs for development and social change.

Major portion of the agriculture and livestock management is taken care of by the Baloch women as they do the planting, weeding, hoeing and harvesting in the fields close to their houses. Feeding of the livestock as well as providing them with traditional care for diseases is also their responsibility. Other main activities of the Baloch women comprise of taking care of house errands, children and animals. Although, most of these women belong to the ultra poor class, their embroidery work is artistic with a high-quality level of skill; hence, their work receives considerable local and international appreciation and is a source of income for these women. However, their indigenous talent is exploited by many, specifically the various layers of middle men, and that leads to lack of fair trade, inconsistent revenue and low income.

The role of a Baloch woman is not only important in the economic activities of the under-developed province of Balochistan but also in non-economic activities. Baloch women need to be empowered through incorporating constructive values, traditions and skill and capacity building with rapid changes, revival and promotion of their positive aspects and skills to develop the socio-economic landscape of the province through a sustainable route.

Introduction

The purpose of IPP project was to enhance the induced capabilities and bring a change in perspective in the rural people of Balochistan with respect to what they could do with their skills in their respective villages and how they can capitalize those skills into micro businesses, and further into their lives. The programme was mainly focused on the women in Balochistan.

Incubating Potential Programme (IPP) in Balochistan is a project initiated and implemented by SEED in collaboration with BRAC in the districts Sakran and Winder. The project was executed with the objective of bringing betterment in the lives of participating women who were skilled artisans and invest their energies into their skill in order to earn subsequent income to fulfil the necessities of their families. But as majority of rural women are illiterate and are unaware of business and market trends, they are often unable to scale up or think creatively in terms of exploring



entrepreneurship as a revenue generating avenue. Another group of men and women were trained as Merchandisers to take the responsibility of understanding and creating market linkages and developing business for the Artisans, and for themselves.

IPP aimed to educate and train these women through entrepreneurship workshops and equip them with relevant business knowledge and skills in order for them to flourish in their skill and trade. BRAC intends to open the doors of opportunities for these women by setting up a production and vocational training facility in the vicinity. As a first step for this stage, BRAC arranged for vocational and entrepreneurial trainings to disseminate knowledge of latest market trends and instil business understanding and awareness in the women who were part of the programme so that they would be able to work effectively and productively in the facility in future with little or no assistance, and increase the revenue for their families.

Partner Organisations

SEED - Social Entrepreneurship and Equity Development - creates and develops a global sphere of entrepreneurial solutions across multiple structured verticals in regional, national and international markets to bring about a societal and economic change.

SEED works in a structured and strategic manner to promote and facilitate entrepreneurship at various levels, be it Start-ups, Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Microenterprises or Grass root Entrepreneurs. The organisation works with public and private sectors, media as well as academia, and has programmes for urban centres, urban slums, rural, semi rural and regional areas.

BRAC is an International NGO working in Pakistan as BRAC Pakistan. BRAC works in various sectors ranging from provision of basic needs health, education, livelihood to social upliftment through targeting ultra poverty, community empowerment, human rights & legal aid, civic sense as well as providing financial services access through microfinance and social enterprises.

Addressing the analyzed needs of the marginalized population in Balochistan, BRAC initiated Targeting Ultra Poor and then livelihood enhancement and protection institutional development (LEP-ID) programme with an objective to develop capacity, improve opportunities, provide assets, and increase productivity of the community members.

Project Description

Overview

BRAC was in the process of establishing a training center in rural areas of Balochistan to cater to vocational and need-based trainings among the ultra poor rural women along with production centres which aim to develop and promote a value chain. To make this initiative successful, it was necessary to train the residents of the locality in order to hire them in the facility besides inviting outsiders for the functioning of the facility.

Through this initiative, we have mainly focused on women as participants for training; as they were experienced in making cultural handicrafts which is one of the few ways to earn but due to lack of business knowledge, they were not able to make ends meet. With the provision of BRAC production facility local people, specifically women will be empowered and given a chance for fair trade. SEED carried out the planning and execution of entrepreneurial trainings and business orientation programme for the participants in the designated location of Sakran and Winder.



Core Objectives

To enhance the existing capabilities of women in Balochistan in order to bring betterment in their lives

Equip women participants in Balochistan to earn better income

To educate and create awareness in participants regarding basic business skills and merchandising so that they can increase their earnings and scale up their work/business

To empower women to take responsibility of their own economic problems and introduce them to basic financial literacy

To ensure that those undergoing trainings as merchandisers, demonstrate an improved performance in creating market linkages and tapping the right market segment

Instill entrepreneurial acumen in the women participants for them to find sustainable revenue generating opportunities

To widen the horizon of local females through broadening their mindset and perspective

To comprehend actual on-ground challenges of local female artisans and merchandisers in Balochistan to further develop a comprehensive road map to:

Empower

Create enterprises

Sustain

Scale up

Based on the pre-training survey, two sets of trainings had been developed by SEED:

- **Business Orientation Programme for Artisans:** The purpose of the orientation was to instill knowledge in the artisans regarding basic business practices, its establishment, marketing and expansion. (Broken down into different components and explained individually)
- **Merchandiser Training:** Local community members were trained as merchandisers to work with artisans at home and in production centers. They will take and fulfill orders and supervise for quality assurance as well as establish market linkages. (Broken down into different components and explained individually)



Project Process Flow



Pre-Project Survey and Curriculum Development

The trainers visited and met BRAC team for pre evaluation to understand the local landscape, and to assess the curriculum requirement for each location. Additionally, the trainers asked structured questions so that they understood the challenges and could address them during business orientation sessions.

Manuals and activities were developed according to the initial survey/needs assessment as well as the information provided by BRAC team which was later customized keeping in mind the level of understanding of the participants and the bond of trust that they developed with the trainers. Trainers used mostly interactive activities to ensure maximum engagement of participants, which resulted in active participation and impactful sessions.

Socioeconomic Profile

Majority of the participants from the batch from **Winder** had completed their secondary education and some were pursuing higher education. Due to their literacy level, they were able to understand concepts and functions of the project. The participants had prior knowledge of their work and were skilled; at the same time they also knew how to build relationships that would be helpful for them in business.

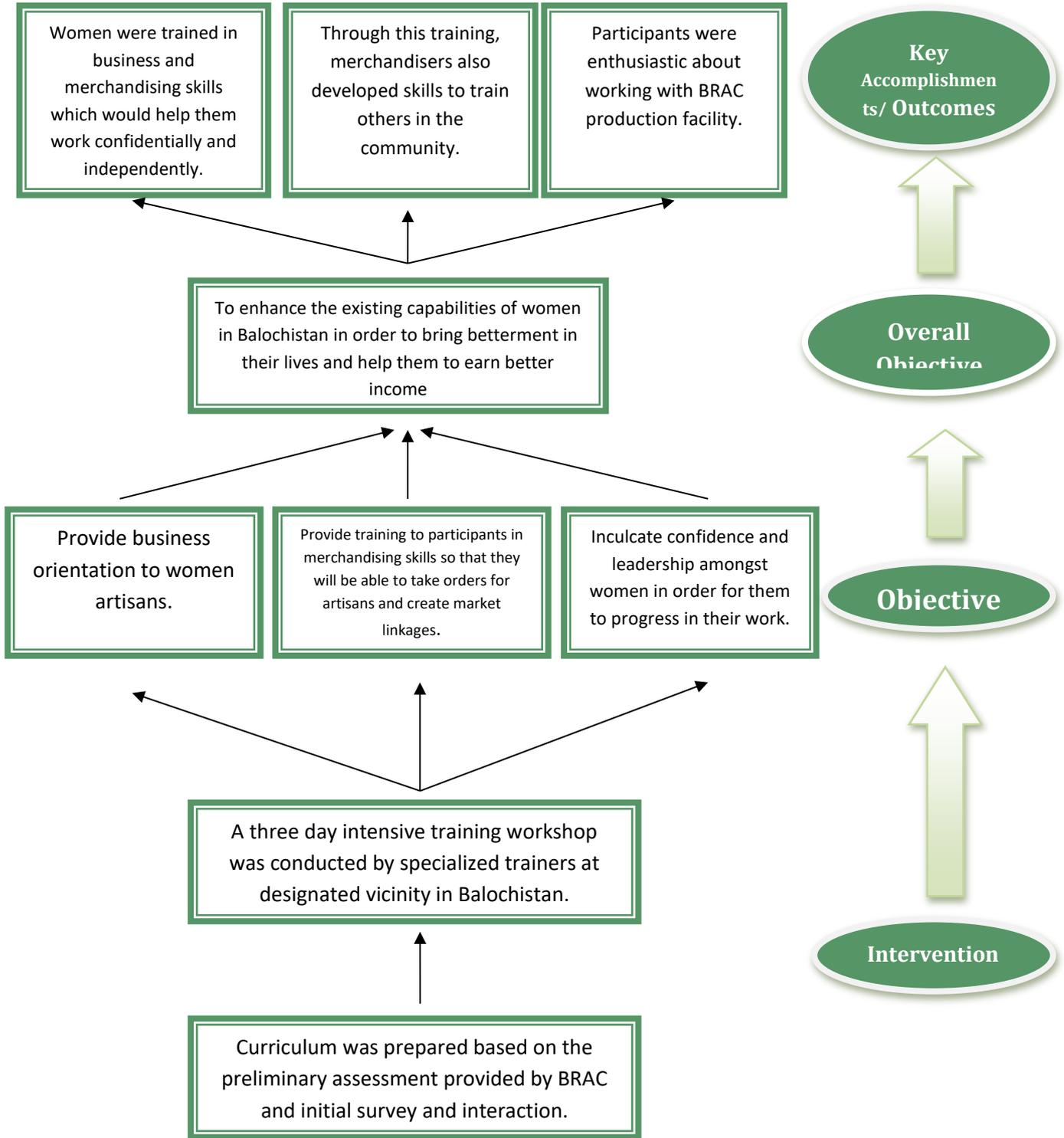
Women artisans at **Sakran** are socially conservative; that can be one of the factors that may hinder the economic growth. However, participants were familiar with a few modern trends of attire and apparel, and have the capacity to provide specific designs fulfilling the needs of consumers particularly. Another encouraging factor was that some of them have access to the city and visit shops which helps further in understanding the market design needs.



On Ground Training Sessions

SESSION. NO	SESSION DETAILS	CORE COMPONENTS
<p align="center">SESSION 1</p>	<p align="center">The initial session was introductory and mostly focused on breaking the ice, sharing the programme objectives and building a rapport with the participants. A bit of informal approach was adapted to break the ice between participants and the trainer/s.</p>	<p align="center">Purpose of workshop in Balochistan and how will it empower the locals</p>
		<p align="center">Introduction to the workshop and the key components</p>
		<p align="center">Why Balochistan is important? And what potential does the neglected province hold for the country</p>
<p align="center">SESSION 2</p>	<p align="center">The core curriculum started from this session onwards. Participants divided into groups of four each, were given a time of 15 minutes to come up with unique ideas that could change the trend of their local markets.</p>	<p align="center">Fundamentals of Merchandising</p>
		<p align="center">4P's of Marketing</p>
		<p align="center">Basic Financial Methods</p>
		<p align="center">Entrepreneurship</p>
<p align="center">SESSION 3</p>	<p align="center">Class participation increased and participants expressed immense interest in the curriculum.</p>	<p align="center">Leadership</p>
		<p align="center">Value Addition</p>
		<p align="center">Health and Hygiene</p>

Key Accomplishments



Key Challenges

The major constraints faced during the implementation of IPP project were:

Trust deficit among local females for trainers

- Trainers made sure to clarify the programme objectives comprehensively and how it will benefit the participants. Also, the trainers incorporated interactive, fun and knowledge enhancing activities in the curriculum to break the communication barrier

Language barrier in both localities as many of the participants did not speak or understand Urdu.

- The language barrier was overcome with the assistance of BRAC personnel who could speak the language and inclusion of another Assistant Trainer from SEED who was fluent in the local language. As the connection was already built with the initial SEED trainers, we made sure that they were present while the local language SEED assistant trainer went on with the training

Lack of pictorial and video documentation due to cultural barriers and sensitivity

- SEED representatives respected the local cultures and sensitivity in respect to photography and videography. Trainers only took limited pictures of participants with permission of who were respectively 'open' towards the act.

Overall Assessment

It was an eye opening experience for the team and as contrary to the usual belief, the people of both localities in Balochistan were forward thinking and progressive. They were eager to change their own condition and many of them were enthusiastic as aspiring entrepreneurs. Rural women interacted very confidently and participated actively during training and showed immense seriousness in learning and applying the teachings.

Lesson Learned

Altogether the project was a success in terms of goals attainment and creating social impact within the community. Following were some of our on ground learning:

- Participants prefer to acquire activity based training; so more interactive activities included in the curriculum rather than theory always has more impact.
- Young participants are often more driven towards the concept of entrepreneurship as compared to senior participants so in order to create massive impact we need to adopt an approach which the senior population of the community can also relate to.
- People showed immense interest in IPP training sessions and requested to conduct such activities more frequently and extensively for a longer duration.

Description of Beneficiaries

The total number of direct beneficiaries of these trainings was 60, out of which 40 underwent enterprise development training and 20 underwent the merchandiser business training. The approximate number of indirect beneficiaries of these trainings is 120 residents of the locality.



Recommendations

Incubating Potential Programme has introduced another avenue of development in Balochistan. It truly has the potential to increase the capacity and capability of regional people. Through such programmes we can bring a noticeable change in the current situation of the ultra poor as well as in the economic and social level of the local people resulting in better impact within the community. Following are some important interventions recommended:





Conclusion

Conducting entrepreneurial trainings in ultra poor rural areas reveals a need for further attention to critically assess and evaluate the respective needs of the rural population. Through such initiatives, we are not only equipping them with relevant knowledge but also potential sustaining income streams. Incubating Potential Programme (IPP), demonstrates that participants in Balochistan can improve their economic situation with programmes like these and interventions and programmes by BRAC online and offline streams.

During this project, the potential among the participants was witnessed and they were willing to learn to scale up or set up businesses. Such initiatives can prove to be very beneficial in increasing the capacity of the individuals who can then shape it into a constructive model of betterment.

We strongly recommend more programmes like these with continuity in Balochistan and develop sustainable programmes for this region.



Testimonials

Ameena:

Teacher

“I’m the only one in the batch who can speak and understand Urdu fluently, that is why my trainers have made me the interpreter between them and the whole class which makes me feel really proud and honoured. I’m a teacher by profession and love to learn and experience new things. Through this session, I got to know about team building skills, importance of entrepreneurship and how to adopt it. Along with that I get an inspiration to stay calm and positive no matter how bad the conditions may be.”



Amna:

Housewife

“I’m a housewife; taking care of my family is my prime duty. Along with that I make some cultural handcrafts in the premises of my home in order to earn some money, but unfortunately I have been not been successful for quite a long time in this. But after this training session I got to know the importance of business skills and its application as part of my work. I now aspire for the brighter future for myself through my persistent efforts.”



Zulaikha:

Senior Citizen

“I have spent more than half of my life living here and compromised with the ongoing situation long time ago. We believe that we were born this way and going to die same. I use to make handcrafts for earning some income which was fine but sometime my designs get rejected when gone for quality check. These trainings have helped us to realize our true potential which can bring change in our current situation. With this training I’m now able to add quality and value to my products and get to know the idea that how can I increase my earnings on specific occasions like Eid, Diwali etc.”





Snapshots

