

 Early Warning System

WB-P504700

Improving Dietary Diversity and Quality to Address Child Stunting: A Woman and Small Farmer Centered Community-based Pilot in Punjab



Quick Facts

Countries	Pakistan
Specific Location	Rural Punjab
Financial Institutions	World Bank (WB)
Status	Canceled
Bank Risk Rating	C
Voting Date	2026-06-20
Borrower	National Rural Support Program
Sectors	Agriculture and Forestry, Education and Health
Investment Type(s)	Grant
Investment Amount (USD)	\$ 2.73 million
Project Cost (USD)	\$ 2.73 million



Project Description

According to the Bank's website, the objective of this project is to improve household dietary diversity and quality in selected villages in rural Punjab, with a focus on households with children under two years of age, newly married women, and pregnant and lactating women.

The core objectives of the project are to promote the year-round production and consumption of nutrient rich vegetables and fruits, increase the availability of affordable animal protein, reduce the wastage of fresh produce, and ensure that food is handled and prepared in a manner that is safe and maintains its nutrient value. The primary focus will be households with pregnant or lactating women (PLW), newly married women who will soon become pregnant and households with children under the age of two. Given Pakistan's fertility rate, this includes some 70 percent of all rural households. These objectives will be achieved through the following activities in each program village: (1) the promotion of homestead vegetable gardens (including small-scale vegetable farms) and the integration of fruit and other beneficial trees in backyard gardens and in farms. This will include the development and delivery of advisory materials through group meetings using village-based community organizations, demonstration gardens in each village where hands on training would be provided and household level handholding and troubleshooting, as needed; (2) training and support to set up one or more seed and plant nurseries in each village. Village-level entrepreneurs will be trained and provided material support for setting up a seed and plant nursery. This would be run as a community business to ensure the sustained supply of high-quality and affordable seeds and plant and tree saplings in the village; (3) the provision of solar dehydrators to ensure that all excess produce is processed for safe storage; (4) the provision of solar chicken hatcheries to ensure the availability of affordable eggs. The solar hatcheries and solar dehydrators will also be run by community organizations as a community business on a cost recovery basis to ensure sustainability. A fully trained horticulturist and veterinarian will train two community members in each tehsil to serve as assistant horticulturist and assistant veterinarian. In addition, two community volunteers will be trained in each village to support the assistant horticulturist and veterinarian. These community volunteers will support households on a day to day basis in the cultivation of fruits and vegetables and in managing their poultry production. The volunteers will act as knowledge centers, promoting best practices in small scale organic and sustainable farming and the harvesting and post-harvest management of fruits and vegetables. They will also distribute input packages to eligible households. The horticulturist and veterinarian will cover all program villages and remain available for trouble shooting that exceeds the expertise of the tehsil level assistant horticulturist and veterinarian and the village level trained community volunteers. To build sustained demand for nutrient-rich foods, the staff of the implementing agency (social organizers) will also deliver behavior change communication (BCC) messages on the importance of dietary diversity and quality in the complementary feeding of infants as well as for the health of women during preconception, pregnancy, and lactation. A key component of this will be the organization of monthly meetings which will include cooking demonstrations and advice on food safety. Finally, the project will include a robust randomized impact evaluation. This will help build the evidence for a successful scale up of the program. It will have two objectives: (i) to build evidence on the key final outcomes; (ii) support the implementation of the project so it can make needed course corrections or modifications.



Early Warning System Project Analysis

At concept stage, the environmental and social risk ratings area assessed as **Low**. The primary environmental risks are associated with the operation of community assets, particularly poultry hatcheries/incubators. Though these interventions are expected to be small-scale, they may still generate significant waste streams, including potentially hazardous biological and chemical waste, which can negatively impact the local environment and nearby water resources if improperly disposed of. The availability of services provided by community hatcheries/incubators may also lead to a localized increase in poultry rearing, which may result in additional waste management issues and increased strain on water resources, particularly in water-stressed areas. An increase in vegetable and fruit gardens/small farms may also similarly impact water demand. While the project aims to promote sustainable agriculture, inadequate design of training materials, or improper training on the use of agricultural and veterinary inputs (which could include fertilizers, pesticides, and medications), may lead to the promotion of undesirable, environmentally unsustainable practices, environmental contamination of soil and water, harm to local flora and fauna, and accidental exposure to community members. Improper selection of these inputs could pose similar risks. Solar hatcheries/incubators are also likely to generate electronic waste as they reach end-of-life.

the project activities may carry social risks, most of which are expected to be minor given the small-scale nature of the activities. Perceived social risks include possibility of elite capture of project benefits and social exclusion of marginalized communities. There is potential for conflicts arising around the selection process for trainings and leadership roles, management of shared community assets, shared land-use models, and service fees associated with some project interventions like hatcheries and solar dehydrators. Improper design of training and BCC materials, if not considering varying literacy levels, local languages, and cultural contexts, could lead to social exclusion. Low level CHS and OHS risks are associated with the operation of project-provided community facilities and the usage of inputs such as agrochemicals and veterinary medicines. In the context of randomized control trial, there is a risk of community resentment and perceptions of inequity in proximate and control villages not directly receiving project benefits. Risks also include exclusion of marginalized individuals or groups from employment opportunities and potential issues associated with voluntary land donation for shared plots.



Investment Description

- World Bank (WB)

Total Project Cost: US\$ 2.73 million

Japan Social Development Fund: US\$ 2.73 million



Contact Information

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Bank Documents

- [Project Information Document - Improving Dietary Diversity and Quality to Address Child Stunting: A](#)