

Afghanistan-Pakistan Activities
Quarterly Report XXVIII
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Sustainable Development of Drylands Project
IALC-UIUC

Our final quarterly report in the life of this project will deal with the timing and chronology of our efforts to develop human capacity for the agriculture sector in Afghanistan, and secondly, will place on record the actual number of Afghans reached through these training programs.

The numbers are straightforward and tell an impressive story. Through the technical short courses, which were the central feature of training efforts, we reached a total of 501 individuals who play key roles in Afghanistan's agriculture sector. Twenty-six courses on at least 16 different topics were conducted in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, with groups of about 20 in each course. These groups were a blend of participants representing universities, various Afghan ministries and an assortment of NGO's. Most courses were one month in duration, allowing for sufficient networking and interaction within the group and for detailed in-depth coverage of the topic being studied. This total number of short course participants includes 44 women. Course outlines and other details can be found at: www.aces.uiuc.edu/Global/Afghanistan/ .

Research collaboration led to 24 Afghans, from Darul Amaan (Kabul) and Sheshambagh (Jalalabad), being sent in small groups to stations and institutes in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan for specialized short term training. Scientists at the Cereal Crops Research Institute in Nowshera, Pakistan played a central role in these efforts to strengthen research capacity in Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and to establish "twinning" relationships between Afghan and Pakistani research stations.

Long term degree training was provided to 20 Afghans who completed M.Sc. degrees at the NWFP Agricultural University in Peshawar, Pakistan. Masters degrees in a wide range of disciplines were awarded to five from the Faculty of Agriculture at Kabul University, five from the Faculty of Agriculture at Nangarhar University (Jalalabad) and ten from the MAIL Extension Department. Their degree programs included intensive English training and heavy emphasis on individualized and customized enrichment experiences, as well as thesis research conducted in Afghanistan on problems and issues that confront their agriculture sector.

These training activities were supported by the purchase, production and distribution of large quantities of reference and printed materials. These materials were placed in university libraries in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Field offices of the MAIL Extension Department also received reference materials. Training manuals that were produced for the technical short courses were carried back to duty stations by participations in these courses.

Numbers from the financial side of this component are also worth mentioning. Illinois received \$1,320,672 in "core funds" that passed through the Cooperative Agreement between the IALC and USAID. Core funds were managed and "leveraged" to attract an additional \$1,515,363 in supplemental funding. This came from sources such as: Chemonics' RAMP project, USAID-Islamabad, MAIL-Afghanistan, USDA-FAS, ALO-HED, and FAO of the UN.

The evolution and chronology of this component provides valuable perspective as we reflect on events of the past seven years. During the first half of CY2002 the development community (including U.S. universities) became interested in Afghanistan's recovery process, as that country emerged from a generation of chaos. Illinois had established a presence in the region through a ten year period (1984-1994) spent upgrading the NWFP Agricultural University in Peshawar, Pakistan. This USAID-funded university development project had left a well qualified faculty with more than 150 professors and research scientists holding advanced degrees from U.S. universities. After gauging interest at our partner institution in Pakistan and receiving a positive response, Illinois prepared a plan that would use the resources of this Peshawar-based university to assist their neighbors in the recovery process. We reasoned that our Pakistani colleagues could combine their U.S. educational qualifications, with their knowledge of local agro-climatic conditions and region-specific agricultural practices, to help the agriculture sector get back on its feet. Afghanistan's most obvious need, having been isolated for a generation and their entire educational system shut down, was for intensified training that would introduce Afghans to the technology they had missed during the 1980's and 90's.

Our response to this need consisted of a series of "early impact" short courses that would be conducted on the Agricultural University campus in Peshawar. We felt we could have an early impact on the recovery process by using our Pakistani colleagues as short course instructors, while the security situation improved in Afghanistan and the in-country development process began to gather momentum. Arrangements were made for the first courses (one on Water Management, one on Enterprise Development and another on Post-Harvest Handling) to be held during August and September 2003. As we moved ahead with these plans, an August 12, 2003 meeting of the IALC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) became a pivotal event. The TAC group was not in favor of the Illinois plan and did not support our proposed approach to assisting Afghanistan in its recovery. Cooperation with the NWFP Agricultural University was not acceptable to the TAC group and strong concerns were expressed about the potential for damage to the IALC reputation. Given this situation, it became necessary for the Afghanistan-Pakistan component to be managed in such a way that the blame for any problems (or the credit for any successes) would come to rest on the University of Illinois and not on the IALC.

Because we had confidence in our Pakistani partners, Illinois moved ahead with the plan that we developed in 2002/2003. During the intervening years we have made significant contributions to development of human capacity for the agriculture sector in Afghanistan. And during these intervening years, the development process in Afghanistan has gathered momentum. The "early impact" phase has passed. At the early stages of the recovery process, the resources of our partner institution in Pakistan were appropriate and sufficient to meet the development needs of Afghanistan's agriculture sector. An impressive array of development resources has been assembled over the past seven years and is now available to the Afghans. The NWFP Agricultural University is part of that "array of development resources". That university has a definite role to play in the development process and a sincere interest in assisting their neighbors. The partnership with Illinois has brought them to the point where they can independently apply the resources of their university to the continuing and unfolding development needs in Afghanistan during the years ahead.