

# NEWSLETTER

March 2026

## PPAF Celebrates International Women’s Day 2026 – “Daughters of Pakistan”



Inclusive growth and women’s empowerment remain central to Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund’s mandate. Marking International Women’s Day 2026, PPAF, in collaboration with its Partner Organisations, launched a nationwide campaign titled “Daughters of Pakistan.”

The nationwide campaign comprised series of events held across all four provinces, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan bringing together stakeholders from government, academia, civil society, and local communities.

More than a series of events, the campaign created space for dialogue, recognition, and action. It celebrated the strength, resilience, and achievements of women and girls across Pakistan, while reinforcing their vital role in driving inclusive socio-economic development.

Activities ranging from certificate distribution ceremonies and panel discussions to community-level engagements were convened. A key highlight was the distribution of cheques under the Prime Minister’s Interest-Free Loan programme, enabling women to initiate and expand livelihood opportunities, reinforcing their role as active contributors to local economies.

By blending recognition with tangible support, the campaign reaffirmed PPAF’s position as a leading national institution committed to fostering empowerment, resilience, and sustainable socio-economic development across Pakistan.



# Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund

Delivering Prosperity

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Islamabad

## Strengthening Youth Engagement for Inclusive Growth



With over half of Pakistan's population under the age of 30, investing in youth is not just a priority it is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable development. In this context, a high-level meeting was held between Mr. Nadir Gul Barech, CEO PPAF, and Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, at the Prime Minister's Office.

The engagement reflected a shared commitment to strengthening youth-focused initiatives that go beyond short-term interventions to create lasting impact. The discussion focused on expanding nationwide youth engagement initiatives, with particular emphasis on skills development, employment generation, and empowering young people to actively contribute to Pakistan's vision of inclusive and sustainable growth.

The meeting underscored the value of strategic collaboration in translating vision into action. By aligning national platforms with on-ground implementation expertise, such collaborations have the potential to unlock opportunities at scale and deliver meaningful outcomes. For PPAF, it is one more opportunity to build a more equitable society.

## Boosting Livelihoods and Employability under LACIP-II



A recent batch of heavy machinery training under the Livelihood Enhancement and Protection (LEP) component of LACIP-II has been successfully completed by youth from flood-affected districts of Tank and D.I. Khan at the National Logistics Corporation Training Institute, Mandra. The three-month course combined hands-on practical experience with technical instruction and concluded with assessments, certification, and toolkits to support job readiness.

The LEP component under LACIP-II focuses on strengthening employability among youth and flood-affected communities across the project districts of Tank, D.I. Khan, and Lakki Marwat, enabling access to sustainable livelihood opportunities in both local and external job markets. Under this component, more than 2,000 men and women are targeted to receive skills training to support income generation. So far, 75% of the targeted beneficiaries have completed training in various technical and vocational trades, reflecting steady progress in building market-relevant skills.

Beyond skills development, LACIP-II places strong emphasis on local economic inclusion across the three districts, reflected in the successful completion of 40 Integrated Area Upgradation Projects (IAUPs) benefiting over 125,000 individuals. Labour from nearby communities was engaged in executing these IAUPs, generating over 77,000 man-days of employment, involving more than 1,000 skilled and unskilled workers, and disbursing over PKR 136 million in wages. This has provided immediate financial relief while enhancing local skillsets and employability. In addition, income circulation within local markets has supported small businesses and strengthened community economies, while community participation has fostered ownership and contributed to the long-term sustainability of infrastructure.

Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW LACIP is implemented by PPAF through SRSP and SABAWON.



## Restocking Livestock Restores Hope for Flood-Affected Women in District Khuzdar



Under the EU-funded Post-Flood Resilient Recovery and Strengthening of the Livestock Sector in Balochistan project, implemented by PPAF in partnership with BRSP, a livestock restocking intervention has been completed in District Khuzdar, covering Union Councils Baghabana I & II, Lope, and Peeshi Kapar. A total of 331 women farmers were supported with livestock packages, each receiving five animals (four female and one male goat or sheep), amounting to 1,655 animals in total. The intervention is designed to support herd regeneration and gradual income recovery at the household level.

The support comes in response to significant flood-related losses in 2022, which severely impacted livestock-based livelihoods in the area. The loss of animals had affected household income, food security, and the ability of families to sustain children's education and other basic needs.

With the completion of distribution, early indications suggest gradual recovery at the household level. Restored livestock is expected to improve access to milk and other nutritional inputs, while contributing to more stable and predictable income streams for beneficiary families.

At the community level, women beneficiaries are beginning to explore collective approaches such as group-based livestock marketing and community fodder management, which may further support efficiency and resilience over time.

The intervention contributes to longer-term recovery efforts in flood-affected areas by restoring a critical livelihood asset and strengthening the role of women in household and community-level economic activities.

# NEWSLETTER

March 2026

## Expanding Women's Economic Opportunities through Skills Development



Slowly but surely, women's economic empowerment in Pakistan is gaining ground through initiatives that connect training with real livelihood opportunities. The Ba-Ikhtiar project, a partnership between PPAF and PTCL, implemented in 19 districts by PPAF's partner organisations continues to equip women in underserved regions with practical, market-relevant skills that can translate into income generating opportunities.

To date, 70 training batches have been initiated and are being conducted by the Institute of Rural Management, with 27 batches successfully completed, enabling 620 women to graduate and take a step closer to financial independence. At the same time, 899 participants remain actively enrolled in ongoing trainings, reflecting both strong outreach and sustained demand for skills-based learning.

A notable intervention includes specialised training on honeybee keeping conducted in Lower Chitral, designed to enhance participants' employability while promoting sustainable, nature-based income generation. Such trainings are helping participants explore alternative livelihood pathways aligned with local resource potential.

By linking skills with opportunity, the Ba-Ikhtiar project is not only enhancing employability but also strengthening women's economic participation fostering greater self-reliance and long-term resilience across communities.



# NEWSLETTER

March 2026

## Strengthening Community Voices through Multi-Stakeholder Coordination Platform in Diamer

In Diamer, multiple government institutions and development organisations work for community wellbeing and development, but often in isolation. Community institutions and representatives are frequently left out of planning and coordination processes, leading to uneven service delivery where some villages receive overlapping support while others remain underserved. To address this gap, Hashoo Foundation (HF), as implementing partner of PPAF under the Local Area Development Programme in Diamer, identified the need for improved coordination and greater community inclusion in decision-making.

In response, a Multi-Stakeholder Coordination Platform (MSCP) has been established in Tehsil Chilas to strengthen dialogue among key actors. The inaugural session brought together the Deputy Commissioner's Office, relevant line departments including Agriculture, Livestock, Water Management, Rescue 1122, the Assistant Commissioner's Office, Diamer Disaster Management Authority, as well as representatives from Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, Gilgit-Baltistan Rural Support Programme, and leaders of Village Organisations (VOs).

Operating as a government-led platform with the Deputy Commissioner's Office serving as chair and secretariat under a rotating leadership model, the MSCP provides a structured space for coordination. Participants engaged in stakeholder mapping, problem-tree analysis, and discussions on climate risks, livelihood challenges, and environmental pressures. While departments shared technical inputs, community representatives contributed local knowledge on water scarcity, resource use, and traditional practices.

Key outcomes included agreement on a coordination structure, designation of focal persons, and quarterly meetings to address ecosystem and development issues more systematically. In the local socio-cultural context, women's participation in mixed forums remains limited; however, they continue to engage through Participatory Rural Appraisal processes and awareness sessions.

PPAF views coordination and planning as key factors for effective service delivery, with the MSCP serving as a practical example of this approach in Diamer.

### Composition of MSCP

#### Local Organizations

VOs empower communities at the grassroots level

#### NGOs

AKRSP and GBSRP provide support and resources



#### Government Agencies

Includes Deputy Commissioner's office, Agriculture, Livestock, Water Management, Assistant Commissioner's office, and Rescue 1122

#### Disaster Management

DDMA plays a crucial role in emergency response



# NEWSLETTER

March 2026

## Setting a New Standard: Pakistan's First ISO-Certified Olive Processing Facility

In a significant achievement for Pakistan's agriculture sector, the olive processing plant established by PPAF under the Italian funded Programme for Poverty Reduction in Timergara has been awarded ISO 22000:2018 Certification, a globally recognised standard for food safety management systems.

This milestone positions the facility as the first ISO-certified olive processing plant in Pakistan, setting a new benchmark for quality assurance and international compliance. The certification is expected to strengthen the olive value chain, boost farmer confidence, and enhance the competitiveness of Pakistani olive oil in both domestic and global markets.



The achievement not only shows the potential and growth in Pakistan's olive sector, but also highlights PPAF's role in strengthening value chains and improving livelihoods. It stands as a reminder that with the right support, potential can be transformed into engines of sustainable growth.

# NEWSLETTER

March 2026

## Impact Highlights

PPAF is piloting saffron cultivation in Upper Kohistan’s UC Thuti (Kandia valley) to test a high-value, climate-resilient cash crop in remote mountain areas.

Around 470 kg of saffron corms were planted across 8 kanals, with early results showing strong multiplication—each bulb producing four to five new corms, helping build a local seed base.

As one of the world’s most expensive spices, saffron holds high income potential. The pilot is being assessed for both agronomic performance and livelihood viability in high-altitude conditions. Early indications suggest future income from saffron harvests as well as sale of surplus corms, supporting long-term livelihood diversification.



Women in Lower Chitral’s UC Drosh-II are adopting climate-resilient tunnel farming as a smart agriculture approach, creating new livelihood opportunities and contributing to household food security. Under the PPAF funded initiative the first cultivation cycle yielded over 3,000 kilograms of cucumbers from five tunnels, enabling women to earn independent incomes. Building on this progress, a second cultivation cycle with tomato farming is underway, promoting more consistent incomes and a shift towards healthier, organic agricultural practices.



Reliable, uninterrupted healthcare is now available to over 400 daily patients at Rural Health Center Hajipur in Rajanpur— an essential facility in an underserved area where access to quality care is often limited.

Frequent power outages had been disrupting critical services, particularly for women seeking care. With PPAF’s support, the facility has been solarized, ensuring a stable electricity supply. This is enabling consistent service delivery, improving working conditions, and reducing energy costs and allowing more resources to be directed towards essential medicines and patient care.



## Stories from the Field

### PPAF-Trained Community Responders Save Injured American Paraglider in Nagar

In the rugged and breathtaking landscapes of Union Council Hopper, District Nagar in Gilgit Baltistan where adventure tourism is steadily on the rise, community preparedness proved to be the difference between life and loss.

Under the PPAF-funded project, "Rehabilitation of Disaster Affected Districts of Gilgit-Baltistan," implemented by the Gilgit-Baltistan Rural Support Programme (GBRSP), community-based Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) were established and trained to respond to crises in remote, high-risk areas. Equipped with skills in first aid, search and rescue, and safe evacuation, these volunteers stand as the first line of defense in emergencies.

Their training was put to a critical test during the summer tourism season, when an American paraglider suffered serious injuries following a crash landing caused by sudden weather changes. The incident occurred in a steep and isolated area, where delayed response could have led to severe complications.

Acting swiftly upon receiving the alert, the ERT Hopper mobilised without hesitation. Navigating difficult terrain, the team reached the site promptly, administered immediate first aid, and stabilised the injured tourist. Demonstrating coordination and composure under pressure, they safely evacuated the individual and facilitated timely transfer to medical facilities in collaboration with local authorities.

This rapid and effective response not only prevented further injury but also underscored the life-saving potential of community-led disaster preparedness. The incident strengthened local confidence in emergency systems and highlighted the growing importance of safety measures in supporting sustainable tourism in the region.

The rescued paraglider expressed deep appreciation for the professionalism and dedication of the response team, an acknowledgment of the impact of grassroots capacity building.

What could have been a tragic incident instead became a powerful demonstration of community work in action. It reflects how equipping local responders can turn vulnerability into strength and uncertainty into a swift and life-saving action demonstrating PPAF's commitment to building resilient communities that are not only prepared for emergencies, but capable of responding when it matters the most.



## Stories from the Field

### Transforming Meat Processing in Balochistan for Export Growth

In Quetta, Noorzai Enterprises is emerging as a model of modern meat processing, transitioning from a traditional supplier into an export-ready enterprise. Established in 2005, the company has built a strong reputation for delivering hygienic, halal-certified meat to institutional and commercial clients, while maintaining strong linkages with livestock farmers across surrounding districts. By sourcing directly from rural producers, the enterprise ensures fair pricing, consistent supply, and improved traceability strengthening rural livelihoods and local value chains.

With support from EU funded Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) project, the SME received a PKR 20 million matching grant which was complemented by PKR 6 million in owner investment. The influx of PKR 26 million enabled establishment of a modern slaughterhouse equipped with automated processing lines, halal-compliant systems, cold storage, blast freezing units, and vacuum packaging technology.

As a result, processing capacity expanded significantly with improved hygiene and food safety standards in place. The new position allows Noorzai Enterprises to access high-value domestic and export markets, particularly in the Gulf region. The expansion also generated 25–30 new jobs, including opportunities for women and persons with disabilities, demonstrating how targeted investment can drive inclusive growth and modernise Balochistan's livestock sector.



## Stories from the Field

### A Journey towards Self Reliance and Ownership

In Okara resides Najma Arshad, a mother of four daughters from Hujra Shah Muqem who once struggled to meet basic needs as the household relied on her husband's irregular daily wages. Educational expenses and daily living costs often placed the family under financial stress, making it difficult to plan for the future. Determined to change their circumstances, Najma and her husband decided to start a small business.

Through the Prime Minister's Interest-Free Loan programme implemented by PPAF through its partner organisation Agahe Pakistan in Okara, Najma received her first loan of PKR 50,000. With this support, the couple rented a small shop and started a grocery business. Over time, through three additional loan cycles (PKR 50,000, PKR 55,000, and PKR 55,000), they expanded their inventory, stabilised their income, and gradually improved their living conditions. Today, in her fourth loan cycle, Najma has achieved a major milestone by purchasing her own shop, moving from rented premises to self-owned facility. Her family now runs a stable business, manages household expenses with dignity, can support the education of all four daughters, while also building savings and financial security for the future. Her business has seen remarkable growth, with daily sales increasing from PKR 6,000–7,000 to PKR 15,000–18,000, and monthly income rising from PKR 25,000–30,000 to PKR 45,000–51,000.

Beyond financial gains, the impact on her family's life has been profound. Najma now regularly saves from her income, supporting her daughters' education in good schools and colleges.

Najma's journey reflects how access to financial resources can do more than support livelihoods it can restore confidence, enable long-term stability, and create opportunities for the next generation.



## Stories from the Field

### Restoring Irrigation Reviving Livelihoods in Basti Shekh Wala

In Basti Shekh Wala, Union Council Mutfariq Chahan, District Dera Ghazi Khan, the rehabilitation of the Shekh Wala irrigation channel has brought transformative change for more than 300 rural families. The area, repeatedly affected by floods and heavy rainfall between 2010 and 2023, had long suffered from damaged water channels, leading to severe water scarcity, reduced agricultural productivity, and increased health risks due to contaminated water.

Under the Restoring Social Services & Climate Resilience project, supported by PPAF and locally implemented by the Farmers Development Organization, a 700-foot-long Shekh Wala channel was desilted, repaired, and lined through strong community participation. Local farmers and laborers contributed labor and materials, while technical adaptations ensured improved water flow and reduced losses. Completed within two months, the intervention restored a vital irrigation source for the community.

With restoration completed, the channel has revived a critical water source for the community. Around 200 acres of farmland are now receiving regular irrigation, leading to improved crop yields and more stable household incomes. Access to cleaner water has also helped reduce health-related risks in the area.

Beyond immediate gains, the rehabilitation has encouraged collective responsibility for maintenance and improved community coordination around water management. It has also opened up new opportunities, with residents beginning to explore diversified livelihoods such as vegetable cultivation and fish farming, signalling a gradual shift towards longer-term economic resilience.

