

# European Parliament Delegation Visits GRASP-Supported SMEs in Sindh



A high-level delegation from the European Parliament visited Sindh to witness how EU-funded GRASP initiatives are revitalising rural enterprises, empowering women, and strengthening local value chains. Led by Mr. Lukas Mandl, the delegation included Mr. Tomas Zdechovsky, Mr. Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Mr. Robert Biedroń, and Mr. Marc Jongen, joined by representatives from the EU in Pakistan, ITC, PPAF, and FAO.

In Hyderabad, the delegation met Nusrat Bibi, whose home-based venture, Fiza Desi Ghee, has grown into a formal enterprise through a PKR 0.5 million GRASP matching grant. With improved equipment, packaging, and production systems, Nusrat has increased her income, created jobs for local women, and stepped forward as a confident entrepreneur.

The group then visited S. Nizamani Enterprise in Tando Allahyar, supported by a PKR 30 million matching grant for its pioneering banana tissue culture laboratory. By producing disease-free, high-yield banana varieties to combat Panama disease, the enterprise is helping farmers safeguard crops, boost productivity, and secure livelihoods. The delegation praised this innovation for its vital role in strengthening the region's agricultural value chain.

EU members commended the progress of GRASP-supported SMEs and the meaningful change taking place at the grassroots level. Their interactions highlighted how local innovation, combined with targeted support, can drive inclusive growth and economic resilience. Reflecting on the visit, Mr. Lukas Mandl noted, "We were pleased to see EU funding enabling SMEs to scale up. The GRASP project creates employment, enhances food security, and builds local capacity through technology that helps prevent banana diseases."



## LACIP Impact Spotlighted During KfW Visit



A high-level delegation from KfW Development Bank visited the PPAF Head Office in Islamabad. The delegation led by Mr Torsten Jellestad, Head of Division (Infrastructure and Finance), included Mr Aaron Müller, Portfolio Manager, KfW Frankfurt, and Mr Imran Khan, Senior Sector Specialist (Governance), KfW Islamabad.

During the meeting, CEO PPAF Mr Nadir Gul Barech shared an overview of PPAF's key achievements and ongoing initiatives, highlighting the organisation's sustained efforts in community-led development. He reiterated PPAF's commitment to strengthening local institutions and enabling communities to drive their own socio-economic progress. He also briefed the delegation on the progress of the Livelihood Support and Promotion of Small Community Infrastructure Programme (LACIP), funded by the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW. The programme is currently active in 16 flood-affected Union Councils across D.I. Khan, Lakki Marwat, and Tank, implemented through partner organisations SRSP and SABAWON. Its ongoing phase includes 80 integrated infrastructure schemes, skills training for 2,000 men and women, and awareness sessions engaging 5,000 participants on state-citizen dialogue and local governance.

The delegation commended the milestones achieved under LACIP, recognising its positive impact on 1.7 million people over the past 13 years, particularly its contributions to women's empowerment and climate resilience in remote, culturally restrictive regions. The visit concluded with a reaffirmed commitment from both sides to deepen collaboration and continue promoting inclusive, climate-resilient development across Pakistan.



# Connecting Women to Opportunity



The Ba-Ikhtiar Women Project, a joint initiative of the PTCL Group and PPAF continues to strengthen women's digital and economic empowerment across Pakistan. The most recent milestone came at GITEX Global 2025 in Dubai, where PPAF and PTCL formalised their partnership through an MoU signing. Led by Mr. Hatem Bamatraf, President & Group CEO PTCL & Ufone 4G, and Mr. Nadir Gul Barech, CEO PPAF, the signing highlighted the growing momentum behind the Ba-Ikhtiar initiative and underscored the transformative potential of cross-sector collaboration. Building on this development, PPAF emphasised its dedication to integrating social development with digital innovation to help women advance toward long-term economic self-reliance.

The initiative first took shape in its pilot phase in Haripur District, where 100 women entrepreneurs were equipped with digital literacy, financial skills, and practical tools to strengthen their micro-enterprises. Participants received training in embroidery, tailoring, online marketing, and e-commerce, and were supported with smartphones and data packages to enhance digital access.

Encouraged by the pilot's success, Phase II of Ba-Ikhtiar is expanding to 22 districts, reaching 2,100 skilled and semi-skilled women. This scale-up aligns with PPAF's strategy which prioritises women's inclusion in the digital economy and promotes technology-led pathways for sustainable livelihoods.

Through Ba-Ikhtiar, PPAF and PTCL aim to empower marginalised women with the skills, connectivity, and confidence needed to participate fully in Pakistan's evolving digital landscape.



## PPAF Showcases Climate Action at the NDMA's Conference



At a time when climate-induced disasters are reshaping Pakistan's development landscape, PPAF reaffirmed its critical role at the NDMA Post-Monsoon Operational Review Conference in Islamabad. Speaking at the forum, Mr. Arshad Rashid, Chief Programmes, showcased how PPAF's climate resilience initiatives continue to strengthen government-led disaster management efforts demonstrating the organisation's capacity to operate at scale and in close coordination with national systems.



He outlined PPAF's forward-looking approach rooted in anticipatory action, disaster preparedness, and sustainable recovery, components that align directly with NDMA's priorities for protecting vulnerable communities.

Sharing details from the PPAF Flood Emergency Response 2025, Mr. Rashid noted that the initiative implemented through 18 partner organisations is supporting 343,859 individuals across 45 flood-affected districts in AJK, Gilgit Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh. Key assistance included 147,381 food, non-food, and hygiene packs; 124 free health and 138 veterinary camps; and six water filtration plants. All interventions grounded in rapid needs assessments validated by NDMA, PDMAs, and local administrations, reflect strong alignment with government-led disaster response mechanisms.

He emphasised that PPAF's overarching priority remains building resilient communities. By linking immediate relief with long-term climate adaptation, PPAF continues to promote equitable, community-led, and sustainable recovery in partnership with the Government of Pakistan.

## Climate-Smart BHU Inaugurated in Thatta

In Union Council Ghaaa, District Thatta, a critical climate-resilient upgrade to the area's only Basic Health Unit (BHU) was inaugurated by MNA Sadiq Ali Memon marking a significant recognition of PPAF's efforts to strengthen government service delivery in vulnerable coastal regions. The BHU serves over 30 surrounding villages and nearly 200 patients daily, yet for years it faced inadequate infrastructure, unreliable power supply, and stagnant floodwater that repeatedly disrupted essential services. Maternity care was among the most affected, with deliveries often carried out under mobile phone light.

Under the PPAF-funded Restoring Social Services and Climate Resilience Project, the Sindh Community Foundation (SCF) implemented a climate-resilient upgrade in consultation with local communities and women's groups. Key improvements include an eco-friendly, zero-carbon waiting area for over 200 patients, a solar power system ensuring uninterrupted electricity in maternity and labour rooms, a natural drainage and filtration system supported by tree plantation, and gender-sensitive sanitation facilities.

Speaking at the inauguration, MNA Sadiq Ali commended PPAF and SCF for "shouldering critical challenges and supporting government efforts to serve remote communities."

The upgraded BHU not only restores comfort and dignity for patients but also strengthens community resilience and service delivery in the region. It now serves as a model for climate-smart health infrastructure, benefiting patients and supporting government teams, including polio workers, in delivering awareness and outreach activities—demonstrating how sustainable, community-focused interventions can transform lives in the most vulnerable areas.



# PPAF set to Join the 16 Days of Activism Campaign

## 16 Days of Activism

**ending digital violence against all women and girls.**

**25 NOVEMBER TO 10 DECEMBER**



PPAF is preparing to participate in the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, which this year focuses on ending digital violence against women and girls. As part of the planned activities, PPAF will air public service messages through Radio Pakistan to raise awareness about online harassment and available reporting channels. Special episodes of the Development Dialogue podcast series are also in production, featuring experts who will share practical guidance on staying safe online—covering cyberbullying, data misuse, and AI-generated fake content.

Follow PPAF on social media and join the campaign for a safer, more respectful digital space for all women and girls.

# Knowledge and Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Mitigation



As climate-induced disasters continue to threaten vulnerable communities across Pakistan, PPAF is leading a major push to strengthen resilience where it is needed most. Through three large-scale initiatives implemented across 61 flood-affected union councils in 19 districts, PPAF is working to restore livelihoods, rebuild essential infrastructure, and reinforce long-term climate resilience. These efforts focussing: Restoring Social Services and Climate Resilience, Rehabilitation of Green Infrastructure in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Recovery in Disaster-Affected Districts of Gilgit-Baltistan—represent PPAF’s most extensive, coordinated response to recurring climate shocks, aligning recovery with sustainable, community-driven resilience planning.

A central pillar of this work is PPAF’s comprehensive capacity-building and awareness framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). Through this framework, PPAF is conducting district-level trainings for Partner Organisations, government departments, local leaders, and community institutions. Each district engagement includes a three-day training on leadership and resilience, followed by a one-day awareness and networking session to strengthen community preparedness and local coordination.

To implement these trainings effectively, PPAF has engaged the Institute of Rural Management (IRM). Working closely with 30 Partner Organisations, IRM has so far completed sessions in 14 districts, training 1,443 participants including 223 women from government bodies, disaster management authorities, local governance structures, and civil society. By the end of the programme, around 570 participants will be trained through three-day workshops and nearly 1,330 community members engaged through awareness sessions. These efforts are equipping POs and local actors with the knowledge and tools needed to strengthen climate resilience at the grassroots.

## Relief for Sindh's Flood-Hit Families



Following the successful completion of relief distribution in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab, operations have now moved to Sindh under the PPAF-funded Flood Emergency Response 2025 initiative. As floodwaters travelled south from Punjab, authorities in Sindh evacuated over 100,000 residents from Katcha and other low-lying Indus River areas to safeguard lives.

In response, PPAF is supporting 5,000 vulnerable families through 15,000 relief packs across seven districts—Jamshoro, Ghotki, Thatta, Dadu, Sujawal, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Matiari—implemented by its local partner, HANDS Pakistan.

With beneficiary assessments completed across all targeted districts, distribution is now well underway. The first camp in Village Allah Warayo, UC Talti (Jamshoro), successfully delivered essential food, non-food, and hygiene items to affected families. Since then, relief efforts have continued across the remaining districts, ensuring displaced and flood-affected households receive timely assistance. Overall distribution in Sindh is progressing as planned and remains on track for completion within the agreed timeline.

## CEO PPAF Featured on National TV

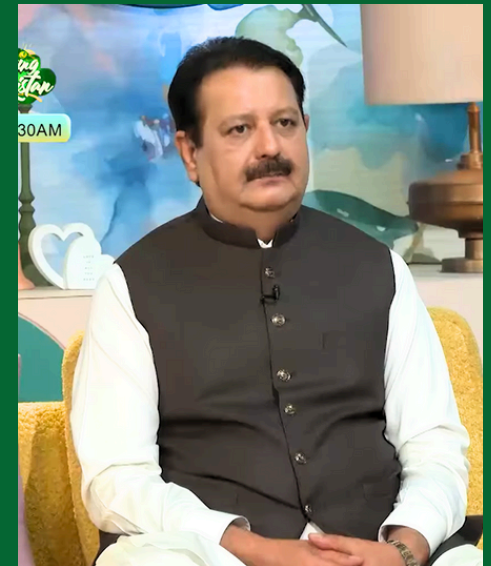


In a special episode of PTV Home's morning show Rising Pakistan marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2025, CEO PPAF, Mr. Nadir Gul Barech, shared powerful insights on PPAF's mission and impact. Reflecting on the organisation's journey, he highlighted how PPAF continues to strengthen community institutions, promote social justice, and drive sustainable, climate-resilient development at the grassroots ensuring dignity, inclusion, and opportunity for all.

He underscored that PPAF's proven model anchored in livelihood assets, skills development, and interest free loans enables families to move out of poverty with resilience and long-term self-reliance.

Watch the full interview here

<https://youtu.be/KnSQePMmHZo?si=UF0w86aWx4XiLyim>



# Stories from the Field

## Akhtar's Story of Resilience

In the rugged hills of District Kohlu, Balochistan, where opportunities are scarce and daily survival is a struggle, Muhammad Akhtar dared to dream beyond his circumstances. Born to a labourer's family with limited means, even basic education seemed out of reach—a privilege his parents simply could not afford.

The launch of the Chamalang Balochistan Education Scholarship Programme, supported by the Pakistan Army and PPAF changed everything. Offering financial assistance, academic support, and a clear pathway for disadvantaged children, the programme opened a door Akhtar had never imagined possible.

Starting from nursery, Akhtar progressed through each stage of his education under the Chamalang Programme. His dedication and strong academic performance carried him through matriculation and FA/FSc with distinction, fuelling his ambition to continue further. He went on to complete his university education with the same resolve.

Akhtar's determination led him to a proud milestone earning a position at the Survey of Pakistan in Islamabad, a prestigious institution far from the hardships of his childhood.

Today, he stands as proof that the right support can transform lives. Akhtar's journey demonstrates how PPAF's initiatives like the Chamalang Scholarship Programme, empower marginalised youth to rise above poverty and build a future once beyond their imagination.



# Stories from the Field

## Ayesha's Journey from Passion to Prosperity

In Hujra Shah Muqem district Oraka, Punjab 36-year-old Ayesha Mubashir dreamed of giving her young daughter a better future. Her husband sold dahi bhallay, but his limited income could barely support the family. Determined to contribute, Ayesha decided to transform the one skill she had always excelled at, Zardozi embroidery an intricate art of hand embroidery on formal wear costumes, into a source of income.

Through the Government of Pakistan's Interest Free Loan Programme, implemented nationwide by PPAF through its partner organisations, Ayesha received her first interest free loan of Rs. 55,000. With this support, she purchased high-quality materials and began crafting wedding dresses, lehengas, and maxis from home. Her intricate designs and fine workmanship quickly gained attention, first from neighbours, then from boutiques who trusted her with customised bridal embroidery.

As her business grew, Ayesha took a second loan of Rs. 55,000 to expand production and meet increasing orders. Today, she earns between Rs. 40,000 to 50,000 per month, all while working from home and managing her household.

Through determination, skill, and the support of the interest free loan programme, Ayesha has transformed her family's future. She now contributes confidently to household income, saves regularly, and inspires other women in her community to pursue their ambitions with courage.

Ayesha expresses heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity and support that helped turn her talent into a thriving, sustainable business.



# Stories from the Field

## Sowing Sustainability, Reaping Prosperity

For decades, Islamabad Agri-Enterprises in Pishin, Balochistan, relied on traditional grape farming. Recurring power outages, heavy monsoon rains, and inefficient irrigation caused up to 60% yield loss each season, threatening both profitability and sustainability.

Determined to transform his enterprise, owner Hayat Ullah seized the opportunity provided by the European Union-funded GRASP project, implemented by ITC in partnership with PPAF, FAO, and SMEDA. With a PKR 30 million matching grant, he modernised his operations and adopted climate-smart agricultural practices.

Through GRASP's support, 92 solar panels, drip irrigation systems, and modern trellises were installed, reducing energy and water costs while protecting crops from monsoon damage. Improved trellising enhanced sunlight and airflow, boosting grape yields by 50% and significantly improving fruit quality. Drip irrigation preserved water and enriched soil health, while solar power freed the farm from unreliable electricity and costly fuel.

To curb post-harvest losses, Hayat Ullah established raisin and vinegar processing units, converting surplus grapes into value-added products, expanding market reach, and strengthening resilience. The transformation also created 18 new jobs, benefiting the local community and inspiring neighbouring farmers to adopt sustainable, renewable energy solutions.

Recognised nationally and internationally, Islamabad Agri-Enterprises now exemplifies GRASP's vision of prosperous, climate-smart, and inclusive rural development.

"These changes have not only improved my business but also strengthened the community," says Hayat Ullah. "We are saving resources, creating jobs, and proving that farming can be both profitable and sustainable."

