



Afghanistan Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation,
and Capacity Enhancement (PEACE) Project
Cooperative Agreement #306-A-06-00521-00



Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID's PEACE Project conducted by a team from the University of California, Davis, Texas A&M University, and Mercy Corps, ran from July 1st, 2006 until October 31st, 2012. The mission of the PEACE Project was to improve extensive livestock production in Afghanistan which represents a significant portion of the Afghan economy. The main focus for the first four years of the project was to institutionalize within the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) rangeland management tools and approaches that deal with the risk inherent in livestock operations for migratory herders in Afghanistan. These included a Livestock Early Warning System (LEWS) to predict where annual forage occurred, Nutritional Profiling System (NIRS technology) that provides critical data for the operation of LEWS, and a Livestock Market Information System (LMIS) that helps herders efficiently market their products. Despite security challenges while moving through the central and northern rangelands of Afghanistan, rangeland vegetation surveys that are fundamental to the functioning of the LEWS, were conducted across 15 Provinces in some of the most important rangelands. MAIL staff from the central office in Kabul, as well as from the Provincial Offices where the surveys were conducted, were trained to collect significant rangeland information. In total, 3,280 person days of training were delivered regarding the Livestock Early Warning System.

LEWS technology was adapted to the landscapes where security allowed access and the system was provided to MAIL¹. While the inability of MAIL to keep trained personnel prevented the implementation of the LEWS, the system is available for use when appropriate staff are assigned. The value of the LEWS system is to predict the location, quantity and quality of forage availability so that migratory herders can mitigate the unpredictable environment in which they live. The system also is useful in predicting drought condition for government and emergency response.

Nutritional quality of sheep and goat diets can now be assessed for several important rangelands in Afghanistan because of the laboratory, technology and training implemented by PEACE. MAIL staff can analyze diet quality of these rangelands using near infrared scanning techniques and the correlation equations developed specifically for Afghanistan to make quality estimates. In addition to training several MAIL employees, electronic learning modules were developed in both Pashto and Dari to help prepare future MAIL staff to use this technology. Training conducted totaled more than 1,600 person days.

The Livestock Market Information System (LMIS) was delivered and fully functional within the MAIL by June of 2010. The system was set up to report live animal prices for the different breeds of sheep and goats in the Mazar, Jalalabad and Kabul livestock markets. Having price information makes markets more efficient and boosts economic rates of return for the country as a whole, and allows government to make evidence-based decisions about sectorial policies. MAIL staff collected the information from the markets and reported it to the Kabul office where it was entered into a database located on a LMIS-dedicated server installed at MAIL. The system can be accessed through a website interface or by cell

¹ <http://glews.tamu.edu/listRunResults.epi?lang=&fullView=&unit=metric&runID=3573&startYear>

phone, making it available to anyone that wants market information. PEACE delivered a total of 1,420 person days of training to staff from MAIL and the Independent General Directorate of Kuchi (IGDK).

While the transfer of rangeland management technologies was an important part of improving extensive livestock production in Afghanistan, additional challenges to improving production remained. Personal security and conflicts over mobility and resource access were preventing the necessary movement of livestock between winter and summer rangelands. In Afghanistan, it is the access to summer grazing, usually in the mountain areas, that allows the productivity of these semi-arid systems. Migration corridors are critical to livestock production in Afghanistan's arid landscape. Without secure mobility the productivity of the livestock sector would be severely constrained. Years of war had resulted in an extreme distrust between herders and villagers that has led to limited movement of the herds. Another issue was the land conversion on traditional migratory routes. Stimulated by the high prices of wheat during the global food crisis in 2007-2008 and the need to promote economic growth and food security, there was a major expansion of rain-fed wheat production that further exacerbated the conflicts.

These issues have, and will, continue to represent the most important challenges to improving extensive livestock production in the country because until these are addressed and resolved, the people will not support the implementation of better rangeland management efforts. Raising large numbers of livestock in one location requires large amounts of forage to be purchased or grown and thus intensive production is not cost effective or practical. Reestablishing security and trust between herders and villagers along the migration routes will provide the best chance to improve sustainable livestock production.

Resolving conflicts and building peace along these corridors became the main focus of the PEACE Project in the final two and a half years of the project. PEACE empowered government employees working for the Independent General Directorate of Kuchi (IGDK) and local leaders (herders and villagers) by providing them with the training and skills needed to meet this challenge. As a result, IGDK's Provincial Directors through the Kuchi Shura Program and Local Leaders through the Peace Ambassador Program, worked independently to resolve thousands of conflicts at the request of communities and in response to the lack of any local judicial system.

The PEACE project's Conflict Resolution Program facilitated the resolution of over 3,450 conflicts along five major migration routes. During the second extension (2011 – 2012), the Peace Ambassador Program alone resolved over 2,300 conflicts and over half of these were related to issues over land, water, or migration route access. Peacefully resolving land conflicts along the migration routes will enable land management to occur and will improve livestock production as a result. The key partners in this effort were the IGDK, President Karzai's Advisor on Tribal Affairs and the Sanayee Development Organization. While this effort alone may not permanently resolve all of the conflicts addressed, it has promoted communities to talk with one another about their mutual interests and to seek peaceful solutions to their conflicts. It has also given community leaders the skills necessary to resolve rather than escalate conflicts.

PEACE made a commitment to improve government representation of herders and did so by working to improve capacity of the Independent General Directorate of Kuchi (IGDK) staff. This included facilitating

IGDK Shuras in 30 Provinces and multiple trainings for all 31 Provincial Directors to improve their skills in communication, report writing, conflict resolution and peace building (3,265 person days). The Directorate is expected to address not only conflicts related to land and livestock production, but also all issues related to human health and education. Support for Kuchi Shuras yielded results in these sectors as well by increasing the Director's capacity to collect from and disseminate information to, the people and the IGDK central office in Kabul. The Provincial Directors have successfully managed to establish and maintain relationships with local and national NGO's and government organizations that they have been introduced to through development workshops provided by PEACE. In the Kabul Office, PEACE supported adult education courses in Business Management, Finance, English, and Computer use (7,800 person days) to increase the Directorate's professionalism.

With the assistance of the IGDK, 75 young Kuchi leaders from 20 provinces have participated in a one-month training course aimed at teaching them to communicate effectively to resolve conflicts as well as to build peace between communities (2,250 person days). Some of the participants have already formed Peace Shuras in their Districts that include leaders from all the groups that live there. Others have been developing proposals to conduct conflict resolution and peace building trainings for community members. Youth were targeted for this particular course to create long-term sustainability of the program aimed at reestablishing and maintaining relationships along Kuchi migration corridors. Elder leaders are important today and the youth leaders will be vital for their communities for many years to come.

Improving extensive livestock production for Afghanistan will require continuing with these efforts to capitalize on the momentum developed in the areas of conflict resolution and rangeland management. The MAIL represents a major challenge for those who attempt to build capacity within the Ministry. Low salaries, lack of strong leadership at most levels, lack of incentives, and an unclear agenda for helping the people of Afghanistan make efforts to strengthen the Ministry difficult. As a consequence, a long-term commitment is needed to work with the Rangeland and the Livestock departments.

Kuchi leaders are also in need of more assistance as they struggle to represent a population with severe illiteracy rates and a general lack of education. Herders, the primary livestock producers in Afghanistan, play a critical role in the economy of the nation but continue to be marginalized as a consequence of prejudice and mistrust. Efforts to resolve the land conflicts remain critical to resolving those issues as well as for maintaining any significant degree of livestock production in the country. PEACE has initiated a way forward but much more work and commitment is needed.