



NRI-UK

Dissemination and Learning Workshop on Self Help Groups in Badakhshan, Afghanistan

Monday, 27th November 2006, 9:00-16:00

Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation , RAMP Building 2nd Floor

Introduction: The Agha Khan Foundation, jointly with NRI UK, is implementing a research project to determine the viability of Self Help Groups (SHGs) for community savings and credit in Badakhshan, N.E. Afghanistan. The project operates in areas affected by poppy cultivation and consumption in the districts of Jhurm and Ishkhashim. The project has a strong research mandate and:

- focuses on using SHGs as a way of strengthening community-level institutions, especially for poor men and women
- organizes groups to promote community-based microfinance activities with an emphasis on savings
- arranges credit through linkage loans based on the group performances on savings

SHGs are groups of self-selected men or women of similar economic backgrounds living in the same village. The groups' main function is to save on a regular basis, and use the savings capital for loans to members of the group. However, these can also lead to other social and development benefits. The SHG model has been accepted, even by communities with a strong religious influence, despite its credit related activity.

A small, local team has formed around 94 groups with a membership of around 1600 families, and mobilized around Af 1.80 Million in 6-months. Monitors from the Ministry of Agriculture and ICARDA who recently visited the area appreciated the enthusiasm generated by the project, the progress made and the opportunity it offers for development.

We invite participants from development organizations, including microfinance institutions to a **learning workshop** organized jointly by AKF, NRI-UK, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the RALF Programme*, with the following objectives:

- to inform about the results of the project, the SHG methodology and impact,
- to identify the place (now and in the next 5 years) of the SHG approach among other micro-finance initiatives in the Afghan context (financial, social, developmental contributions)
- to discuss and identify next steps towards the consolidation and expansion of the SHG approach with respect to the specific situation in Afghanistan

Website: www.akdn.org

Proposed Agenda:

1. Opening Remarks (MAI, ICARDA): H.E. Deputy Minister Sharif, N. Malik
9:00 – 09:10
 2. Introduction to the Workshop; Background and Objectives (AKF): 9.10 – 9.20
 3. Introduction of Participants: Each person: 9.20-9.30
 4. The SHG Approach: Seenivasan R: 9.30-9.45
 5. Review on their activities by District Officers and representatives of SHGs: 9.45-10.15
 6. MAI/NRI/ICARDA Monitoring Mission: B Pound, F Fazl , N Malik 10.15-10.30
-----**Tea Break: 10.30-11.00**-----
 7. Joint exercise to identify the different types of microfinance initiatives that are currently offered in Afghanistan, and planned for the near future: 11 – 11.30
 8. Group work to explore the issues around microfinance in Afghanistan, and how these are addressed by SHGs: 11.30 – 12.30
 - ✚ What are the main issues affecting the successful implementation of micro-finance in Afghanistan?
 - ✚ How are these issues addressed by the SHG approach?
- Lunch Break 12.30 – 1.30**-----
9. Plenary presentations and discussion: 3 X 10 mins presentations + discussion: Moderated by Dr Fazl Fazulddin; 1.30-2.30
 10. Development the elements of a forward action plan for the SHG movement in Afghanistan based on collaboration between interested partners, MFIs and Govt. representatives: Moderated by Dr Henri Suter; 2.30 – 3.45
 11. Closure at about 4 p.m. (MAI/RALF-ICARDA)

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- RALF (Research in Alternative Livelihoods Fund) is a 3-year research programme, funded by DFID-UK, managed by ICARDA and implemented by 25 national and international partners in 17 provinces of Afghanistan
 - RALF Website: www.icarda.cgiar.org/RALFweb/RALF.htm

