

Pakistan



P R O J E C T B R I E F

NWFP COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT



South Asia Region (SAR) - Pakistan

O v e r v i e w

For many people in developing countries, the lack of adequate sanitation services is the most important of all environmental issues and a major constraint to development. The problem is particularly acute in densely populated peri-urban areas and rural areas where the large majority of dwellers are typically low-income people. Unsanitary living conditions are the primary cause of the high incidence of diarrheal diseases in developing countries, which kill about 2 million children and cause about 900 million episodes of illness per year. Moreover, the lack of adequate sanitation is a major cause of the degradation of the quality of ground and surface water.

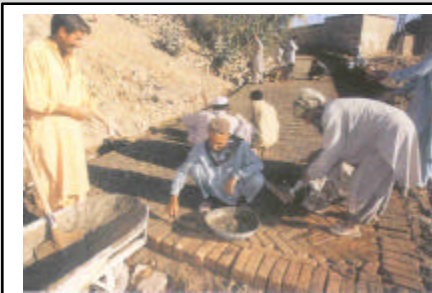
The World Bank-funded **North West Frontier Province Community Infrastructure and National Housing Authority Strengthening Project** (NWFP CIP) in Pakistan is an example of a demand-driven approach to address the challenge of adequate sanitation and water preservation. The project has a participatory design and works in urban and rural areas to provide basic infrastructure through community development to low-income groups in the North West Frontier Province.

T h e C h a l l e n g e

In Chor Lakki, a neglected village perched atop muddy hills 160 km south of Peshawar, the provincial capital of the North West Frontier Province, most of the population is living without the basic amenities of life. Polluted ponds and solid waste accumulating in streets and vacant lots are familiar sights in many communities throughout NWFP. About half of households have to rely on wells, rivers, or springs for drinking water. Unsurfaced roads and footpaths that become impassable during the rainy season are also common.

M a k i n g P r o g r e s s

Yasmida is a resident of Chor Lakki. Until a few months ago, she could not imagine the numerous benefits that some small infrastructure projects would bring for the whole population of her village, as well as for thousands of people living in nearby hamlets. Now she is one of the beneficiaries of **NWFP CIP**, which is jointly funded by the World Bank and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The completion of projects such as village pavements, drainage channels, and a link road has ensured safety, convenience, income generation, and more employment opportunities for the villagers.



Probably the most efficient Community Development Committee (CDC) in North West Frontier Province is SKYAID, or Swat Kohistan Youth Association for Integrated Development. Headquartered in Bahrain, about 30 km north of Madyan, the SKYAID joined hands with the World Bank-funded **NWFP CIP** in September 2001.

Since then, the committee has done wonders in the field of infrastructure development. Not many other CDC in the NWFP has done so much in such a short time. In just 14 months, all streets of Bahrain have been widened and paved along with the installation of proper drainage.

This has radically improved peoples' lives. The incidence of malaria and other diseases has declined as swarms of mosquitoes and flies have diminished thanks to proper drainage of sewage. *"The number of school dropouts has also reduced as children stay healthy,"* says Khaista Gul, a local school teacher and President of the CDC.

Khaista Gul, 37, has six children. *"There is no mud, and no mosquitoes or flies in the streets, which was a common phenomenon before the construction of the streets and the drainage system."* Like Gul, other residents are also in high spirits with the improvements to their quality of life that have resulted from the completion of these infrastructure projects.

Mohammad Altaf, 31, spent his childhood playing in the muddy streets of Bahrain. Now a clerk in a local government office, he compares his small town with a city. *"This is just like a city now,"* a smiling Altaf said. *"My house remains tidy, children are clean and healthy and there are fewer diseases."*

In a second project under CIP, a five-foot-wide walkway has been broadened to a 12-foot metal road that links Ratowal Plaza to the city's hospital. The completion of the road has linked the Basic Health Unit, a school, a court, and the police station. In sum, the link road will help approximately 5,000 residents of Bahrain who previously used a long detour to reach the main road.

At the start of the project, trained community workers inspired the community with a vision of these infrastructure improvements. Enthusiastic villagers donated precious pieces of their land to the road widening project and participated in the construction themselves. The physically able arrived with hoes, shovels, and wheelbarrows, while the less robust contributed one day's labor cost each.

A remarkable feature of the Bahrain CIP is that CDC has already collected the equivalent to 3 percent of the total cost of the project. This amount, deposited in the CDC account, will be used for project maintenance. *"This is the best CDC in NWFP,"* said Maqbool Ahmad, who is responsible for the whole district.

"Now I let my kids go out to play without fear of their drowning in filthy stream water," says Yasmida, whose street has recently been paved with bricks. A drainage channel runs alongside, carrying the sewage out of the village, which previously would have filled the street, making it impassable. *"My children are healthier as they no more suffer from malaria and water-borne diseases."*

The North West Frontier Province Community Infrastructure and National Housing Authority Strengthening Project was designed to improve the living conditions of low-income people, by providing them with the basic infrastructure and community development tools needed to increase their productivity and well being.

The project aims to upgrade basic infrastructure in about 55 low-income urban and rural communities through the provision of water supply, storm water drainage, flood protection, streets and foot paths, sanitation, and solid waste management. It also provides incentive grants towards the costs of sanitation facilities inside the houses, community development, health and hygiene education, and, when requested by the community, improvement of land registration facilities and documentation.

At the very heart of the project design lies the idea that the communities themselves have a significant voice in the design of infrastructure projects and can make a contribution to its capital costs. Project design emphasizes affordable standards so that local councils and communities can contribute, along with having a real say in the selection, design, and implementation process.

L o o k i n g A h e a d

The primary benefit derived from the project is better health from the increased quantity and quality of water in rural and urban areas. Drainage prevents the accumulation of used water, which is a source of disease and groundwater contamination. The collection and disposal of solid waste improves the residential environment and prevents drains and sewers from clogging. Improved sanitation facilities result in safer disposal of waste and less contamination of drinking water supplies.

Those who benefit most are women and children in particular, who, by cultural tradition, spend large amounts of time in and around their homes and who are most affected by the poor conditions of the sanitation systems. Like Yasmida, other women in Chor Lakki find that the construction of sewage channels has facilitated the construction of household latrines, which are more hygienic and convenient. Village women, particularly, have benefited from this scheme, saving considerable time and effort, and, significantly, gaining the privacy of a latrine available to them at any time.

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