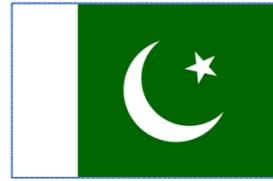




USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



SUCCESS STORY | Mohammad: The Unsung Fighter

Bahaal Project | Emergency Relief and Early Recovery for the Flood Affectees Across Pakistan

“My rice crops had vanished. My house resembled an ancient tomb. My family had lived under the shade of a billion stars for a month and a half. My pockets were empty like a dried well.” These were the words of a more than determined Mohammad Nawaz, for who, like many others, life had taken an unthinkable turn. He is 50 and a farmer from Meher Buksh village in Garhi Dakho area of Khanpur tehsil located in the Shikarpur District. He is well past his prime in terms of physical work in the field and feeds a family of 6 with a wife and 4 children. The flood robbed him of almost everything he owned, but it failed when it came to taking away his unblemished smile.

“My family’s expenses solely depended on the crop yield. I had cultivated rice and was expecting a healthy yield when the word of the impending calamity reached our ears. My family was the only thing on my mind. I opted for safety first and without wasting any time headed for the refuge of Sukkur with my family. We lived there in a relief camp near the airport in tents. Each tent was shared either between 6 to 8 males or 2 to 3 women with their children. We were given food twice everyday and to the credit of the workers at the relief camp it wasn’t bad at all. I was thankful that my children were getting at least something. But to stay in tents miles away from home at someone else’s mercy, after losing everything you once owned, makes your heart sink sometimes. At those moments, I thought about my children and that gave me strength and motivation. There, after spending almost 50 long and painful days, we headed back to what we once used to call our home. I wasn’t very hopeful on my way back from Sukkur but on reaching Meher Buksh when I saw everything I once owned submerged under 10 feet of water, I realized the magnitude of my loss.” narrated Mohammad with a wry smile.



Mohammad, recapping events of his recent past and thanking USAID for its help.

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He continued with a touch of resentment by telling me that he had invested up to Rs. 40,000 of loan money on these crops and that absolutely nothing remained of them. “At first, no one came to help us once we got back. I visited SRSO’s office a couple of times asking for assistance because I had heard from many sources that they actually help. They told me that they were implementing a USAID funded Bahaal Project for flood victims and would visit our area very soon to assess the scale of the damage and address our problems. They stuck to their word. Within 3 days they came to our village and their personnel visited each family listening to their problems and demands. When they left, the whole village was brimming with anticipation.

“I knew that these people were our saviors. After one week, people from SRSO arrived with agriculture inputs which included DAP, fertilizer, wheat seeds and a cash transfer of Rs. 2000 for each family. It felt like being born again”, said Mohammad, with eyes full of hope and morale.

He said that for those three days he was itching to get back to his feet and that USAID’s immediate response motivated him even further. Bolstered by agricultural inputs given to him through Bahaal, he felt so inspired that he started work on his devastated land from the very next day. He applied all the agricultural materials given to him in his field, which covers an area of 10-12 acres, and estimated that he will benefit from a yield of around Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000. He’s grateful to USAID for placing his family on the route to self-sufficiency and enhancing his capacity in repaying his loans.

When told to him that this assistance was being financed by citizens of America through USAID, he couldn’t stop thanking them. He, with a surprising but satisfied look, said “When Allah tests you, He doesn’t forsake you. He examines your faith and can help you in ways you could never even think of. Providing us with help from thousands of miles away just shows that there are still good and generous people in this world and that they will help you even though they don’t know you.”

At the end, with a face beaming with contentment, he said, ‘One day I will invite you and everyone else who helped me in getting back to my feet for a *dawat* (lavish lunch) at my place.’



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