MAKING PROGRESS WITH PINS

Findings from PINS ER-3’s Internal Assessment of On-going Interventions

PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION IN SINDH

In support of the Accelerated Action Plan, Government of Sindh
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From December 2020 to March 2021, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Function of the nutrition-sensitive component of the Programme for Improved Nutrition in Sindh (PINS ER-3) conducted a round of internal assessments to:

- Track the provision and utilisation of inputs provided under this intervention and determine, wherever possible, their immediate benefits for the recipients
- Measure the status of selected output and outcome level indicators of the programme for reporting;
- Assess the status of other linked / complementary interventions
- Document key Programme lessons related to the design, planning, implementation, and follow-up of the interventions
- Identify areas for further qualitative and quantitative studies.

Our sample was made up of over 2,100 households across 150 Village Organisations in PINS’ 10 target districts. The assessment methodology consisted of a quantitative household-level survey using a structured questionnaire for each intervention. The interviews/survey the assessment used a Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) module from an Open Data Kit (ODK) App.

Prior to this, our partner RSP staff was trained through two days in house and field practice. The management of the implementing partners also participated in these events. All efforts have been made to ensure the reliability and validity of quality of data. The ODK App-based data collection was employed to minimize the human error in recording and entry of the data. The M&E Function of PINS-3 conducted periodic field monitoring of the data collection process and completed interviews were validated and cross-checked with sample lists. It also provided online technical support to the field teams throughout the data collection process.

This following report presents our findings and a glimpse into some of the people we met along the way who have left a lasting impression on us.
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**IMPROVING ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER**

Water supply schemes are an essential part of PINS’ targeted infrastructural development aimed at improving communal access to safe drinking water to reduce water-borne diseases that contribute significantly to the prevalent rates of malnutrition. These sources are developed in coordination with the Local Support Organisations to enhance water access in VOs either through installation or rehabilitation of water sources while ensuring that they are disaster-resilient for an uninterrupted supply of water.

Water sources in Programme areas are mapped and tested to signal to the community whether they are safe to use for drinking by marking them green or contain high levels of contamination and are unsafe by painting them red. This also helps determine the next steps in deciding how to boost water supply to households including the location of the new scheme. PINS has also worked with communities in enhancing their knowledge about water safety and management through targeted sessions including training the community institutions in charge to chlorinate sources under their purview bi-annually.

**Our Progress So Far**

- 1,918 LSO members trained on water quality testing and monitoring
- 1,938 Water safety plans developed by VOs as part of their Village Action Plan
- 127 Million invested to develop and rehabilitate critical water supply infrastructure
- 1,472 Hand pumps rehabilitated/installed (as part of 182 water schemes)
- 314 Operational and Maintenance Committees formed and trained
- 25,761 Households accessing safe drinking water
- 2,792 Hand pumps colour marked safe and unsafe
- 1,313 Hand pumps chlorinated

**Elevated Hand Pumps Continue to Supply Water Amid Chaos**

Located near the Kheerthar mountain range in Central Sindh, Sultanabad, one of Johi’s smaller villages gets flooded every monsoon season. Najma, a resident of the village and a Community Resource Person (CRP) trained under Programme for Improved Nutrition in Sindh, explains: “Each rainy season, our land submerges, and we fail to save our crops. If that’s not enough, our hand pumps where we collect water to drink from also submerge so there is a serious shortage of drinking water.”

As the floodwater retreats, it leaves behind all kinds of dirt to clean up, including insects coming out of the hand pumps for up to a month. Residents have to strain the water but that doesn’t do much for the residue that gets left behind. The spike in diarrhoea infections whenever flooding occurs only adds to the community’s troubles.

The new hand pumps constructed in the village take into account disaster risk reduction and have been designed with an elevated platform that doesn’t get submerged the way previous hand pumps have. Though this concept is new to the communities PINS works with, they are wholly behind it. According to Irfan, “Even if the elevated design is slightly more expensive to construct than the kind we had previously, the fact that we’ll continue to have water more than makes up for it.”

A 3 foot elevated platform for the hand pump was constructed, complete with a boring system on completing the round of water testing in the area. Along with contributing 8% of the total cost, the LSO also developed its operation and maintenance plan, designating a committee to oversee its sustainability and manage its operational and maintenance cost.

This year, when the floods hit Sultanabad in early August, the hand pumps were not damaged as they have been previously, allowing for an uninterrupted supply of water. Regular awareness sessions also helped the community be better prepared for this year’s floods, something that Najma is happy about despite the ongoing relief efforts. “The hand pumps survived! And I’m so proud to have been a part of the team that helped with its construction. It’s a source of comfort, not having to scrounge for water like we have all these years!”

93% of the hand pumps were found to be fit and acceptable 6 months after construction/rehabilitation.
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Elevated Hand Pumps Continue to Supply Water Amid Chaos

Our Impact

- 24% Rehabilitated Hand Pumps
- 76% Newly Constructed Hand Pumps
- 93% of the hand pumps were found to be fit and acceptable 6 months after construction/rehabilitation
- 87% of the hand pumps were constructed at an appropriate location to ensure that women and children can easily access them
- 67% of households reported that their water fetching time reduced
- 79% of the households reported a reduced incidence of diarrhoea in children under 5
- Each scheme supplies water to an average of 21 households
Open defecation is a major contributor to diseases such as diarrhea, the prevalence of which leads to malnutrition and stunting in children. PINS uses the Pakistan Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS) to achieve a sustainable end to open defecation in our target communities.

PATS seeks to increase awareness about the adverse consequences of open defecation, poor hygiene practices and use of unsafe water, as well as to ensure that households have access to latrines. It involves household and community level behaviour change sessions, development of social norms to end open defecation, training local plumbers and masons to construct low-cost latrines, as well as providing financial support to the poorest households for latrine construction. To be certified as open defecation free (ODF), the Programme has trained and deployed local Community Resource Persons (CRPs) who support village organisations (VOs) in developing and executing Village Action Plans which chart out their goals and progress towards achieving ODF status.

### Our Progress So Far

- **4,260** CRPs trained on ODF/PATS approach and deployed
- **12,710** Community Organisations sensitised each month on an average through community awareness sessions on hygiene and sanitation
- **327,026** Households were visited on an average by CRPs each quarter to check progress and reinforce positive dietary and hygiene practices
- **1,938** VOs developed Village Action Plans to achieve ODF status
- **99,351** Latrines constructed by households on a self help basis
- **896** VOs certified as Open Defecation Free by District Committees
Machal Takes Charge of Her Family’s Health

Poor health is taxing as is, but in VO Khabri, Shikarpur, seeking treatment comes with its own challenges. With the only available doctor living at a considerable distance, Machal recounted her harrowing experience of being held at gunpoint on her way to the clinic. ‘I was in shock for days. I think it was because while it was happening, I was too scared of what would happen to my child if I did not reach to the doctor right away’.

Machal has three children. It’s been 10 years since she moved from Wazirabad and came to Khabri as a newlywed. Khabri is marked by heavy seasonal rains which also means that waste, contributed largely by open defecation, adds to the spread of disease.

After interacting with Khabri’s Community Resource Person, Machal became increasingly interested in the work that PINS was doing to address malnutrition, given that she was a mother to three young children. By actively taking part in the VO meetings and the awareness sessions, Machal knew that the next thing she and her husband were going to be saving up for was a latrine.

‘We were tired of being frequently ill and even though it now feels like the answer was in front of our eyes, we needed a push. That push came from PINS’.

Along with building and using her latrine, Machal started incorporating other hygiene practices that the CRPs have stressed upon. She’s noticed a significant change, especially, in her children being healthier and more active. Machal expressed gratitude to PINS’ interventions for guiding her in preventing frequent bouts of diarrhea and other illnesses.

Khabri has had 100% latrines since June 2019.

Our Impact

- 73% of the households have a functioning latrine
- Households spent a minimum of PKR 4,500 to build a latrine
- 94% of households with latrines have stopped defecating in the open
- 79% of households kept the latrines they constructed cleaned and well maintained

Types of Latrines Constructed
- 51% Pit Latrine
- 28% Flush Latrine
- 13% VIP Latrine
- 8% Other

Handwashing with Soap at Critical Times
- Do not wash hands with soap 2%
- After coming home from outside 15%
- After cleaning the house 18%
- Before feeding children 54%
- After cleaning babies’ bottoms 55%
- After eating food 56%
- After preparing food 72%
- Before preparing food 82%
- After eating food 82%
- Before using the latrine (defecation, urination) 82%
Farmer Field Schools (FFS) are village level sites where communities come together for informal learning and capacity building on agriculture and livestock. Each of the 1,938 FFS set up under the Programme is managed by a pair of PINS trained Agriculture Entrepreneurs (AEs). Each FFS supports between 150-250 rural households through training and practical demonstration sessions throughout the year. AEs also support these households to establish their own kitchen gardens to grow and consume a variety of seasonal organic vegetables throughout the year. The learning put into practice by communities and households is putting them on a sustainable path towards food security.

Our Progress So Far

- **1,938** FFS were provided the required material and toolkits
- **4,213** AE pairs trained on organic farming practices through modern techniques
- **226,408** Households oriented on organic kitchen gardening practices and provided with a variety of seasonal vegetables seeds
- **37,983** Households oriented on food processing and preservation techniques
- **155,000** Moringa trees planted using saplings cultivated by a farmer field school
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Community-Driven Approaches to Strengthening Organic Farming

Our Progress So Far

- Moringa trees planted using saplings cultivated by a farmer field school
- 155,000 AEs trained on organic farming practices through modern techniques
- 4,213 Households oriented on organic kitchen gardening practices and provided with a variety of seasonal vegetables seeds
- 226,408 FFS were provided the required material and toolkits
- 1,938 Households oriented on food processing and preservation techniques

Najma and Ali Commit to Kitchen Gardening

Najma, a resident of VO Khabri, Shikarpur is certain that she had been plagued with bad luck. Her husband, Ali, met with an accident a year after she got married, and has trouble with his left leg. This made it harder to find work and left Najma struggling to feed their family of 6.

When a farmer field school was set up in their VO, both Najma and Ali enrolled in it, committed to attending every session. Here, they focused on how they could cultivate their kitchen garden that was produced through the year. “We usually got our veggies from the market but that meant bargaining for produce that wasn’t the freshest and Ali wouldn’t be able to go every day.”

Najma is positively glowing with joy when she talks about her experience at the FFS. ‘Ali and I enjoyed having a place to sit and talk and we came back motivated to try out what we had learnt.” They started with the seed packet that they received and have been at it since. Showing off her kitchen garden which Ali and she have been working on for two years, she says “Sure, ours look a little imperfect but I know that they don’t have chemicals (fertilizers) and you can tell that in the taste as well.”

“My wife and I do it together,” Ali reveals proudly, taking in their kitchen garden that boasts of okra, bitter melon and morus fruit. He describes how the chicken used to ruin the garden at first. “My initial response was to throw the shoe at them but it wasn’t a long-term solution,” he explains, laughing, “so we used baans wood and made a high boundary wall with it. That keeps the chickens out”.

Our Impact

- 93% of AEs made compost at least once a year
- 79% of AEs cultivated vegetables over 6 months and more
- 48% of AEs made nurseries to grow saplings and seeds for the community
- 47% Village and Market
- 5% Only Market
- 48% Only Village
- Households harvested an average of 30 Kgs annually from their kitchen gardens
- This resulted in an estimated cost savings of PKR 3,000 in expenditure across the year
- 94% of households recognised at least one benefit of moringa
- 85% Horizontal
- 8% Vertical
- 7% Horizontal & Vertical

Types of Kitchen Gardening
To boost food security, PINS worked with small landholder farmers to improve the availability and diversity of nutritious crops. It also focused on introducing improved methods of crop production that paid heed to climate resilience. Across the 10 Programme districts, small farmer groups were oriented while newer varieties were piloted through demonstration plots to encourage wider adoption. Many families in the targeted Programme districts rely heavily on wheat and rice cultivation, both for income and as the main staple in their diet. Improving crop productivity by increasing yields not only raises their incomes but also enhances their food security. PINS is also working with small landholder farmers to introduce climate-resilient improved methods of crop cultivation and production. The Programme aims to reach over 40,000 rice and wheat farmers, across the 10 Programme districts, through village-level awareness sessions using multimedia learning tools, establishing demonstration plots, on-site technical support, and providing financial grants to support their adoption of improved cultivation methods.

Our Progress So Far

- **190** Demonstration plots established by progressive farmers to showcase improved methods of crop cultivation
- **34,220** Small farmers oriented on improved methods and techniques for climate resilient crop cultivation
- **15,104** Financial grants to small farmers to help them adopt improved methods of crop cultivation
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Ramzan Makes Strides with Bio-fortified Wheat

Muhammed Ramzan has been cultivating wheat for the past 40 years. He took the charge from his father when he turned 32 and taught his only son the way his father did. Except for a few years, when the flooding was bad, Ramzan’s had a good yield. Given his experience and his jovial nature, he is popular among his community who often come to him for advice – crop and otherwise.

With nearly 22% of women (15 – 49) in Sindh deficient in Zinc, the PINS piloted zinc-fortified wheat with 1 farmer in 9 out 10 Programme Districts, providing them technical assistance and zinc-fortified seeds. In Tando Muhammed Khan, Ramzan stepped up, having an interest in using new varieties and worked with the Agriculture and Food Security Officer, Jamil, to cultivate using the bio-fortified variety.

Ramzan successfully harvested wheat last year using bio-fortified wheat which many he claims were skeptical of, ‘I had many of my fellow farmers tell me that I was taking a risk and that this would not work – they are afraid of doing something different but I want what’s best for my family, even if it means taking a risk.’ He also said that the taste of wheat was no different and the roti made using this variety was softer. He also reported an increase in yield – which on average has gone from 28 to 31 maunds per acre.

Like the other farmers who had volunteered to participate in the pilot, Ramzan went on to invite other farmers who had been skeptical to come and see for themselves while selling giving them seed helping to scale the number to 10 farmers who grew the bio-fortified variety.

When we spoke to Ramzan almost a year later, he was getting ready to harvest the new round of wheat using the seed from his previous harvest. He also told us proudly that his son was in his first semester at Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam and had been the recipient of a scholarship to pursue a degree in crop production, ‘I had encouraged him after being a part of this pilot and my son got to interact with Jamil Sb. which piqued his interest in applying. My hope is that one day, he works for his community, helping farmers achieve the best yields.’

Our Impact

Wheat yield increased by an average of 3 maunds

Farmers reported a reduction of PKR 5,500 in wheat cropping expenses

37% of Farmers reported an increased availability of grain at the household and community level

Farmers who adopted drill sowing over broadcasting: 90%

Farmers who used a climate resilient variety of wheat seed: 85%

Farmers who used a climate resilient variety of wheat seed: 73%

61% of Farmers reported an improvement in crop yield or income
For many rural households, dairy produce from their livestock is the only source of proteins essential for a nutritious diet. To increase the availability and consumption of milk in households, particularly by children and pregnant and lactating women (PLWs), PINS provides cash grants to purchase milking goats. Communities are oriented on improved livestock management practices through learning sessions at the village Farmer Field Schools. The Programme also links communities to livestock extension services so their livestock remains healthy and productive.

### Our Progress So Far

- **PKR 197 Million** given as grants to purchase goats
- **6,511** Pregnant and lactating women given grants to purchase goats who bought over 13,000 milking goats with the grants
- **178,644** Women oriented, through nutrition awareness sessions, on the benefits of using milk and eating a diversified diet
- **475,041** Livestock animals treated/vaccinated by Community Livestock Extension Workers (CLEWs)
In VO Sangherki, Sujawal, Naila is still recovering from delivering her seventh baby, a girl, who is two weeks shy from turning two months. Taking care of her children has been difficult, while her husband is away at work till 8 pm. Her family is scraping by on the daily wages Naila’s husband earns, if he can manage to find work.

Like many other families in her village, this means that there isn’t enough to feed. Naila previously did not have a cow or goats to get milk from and on the daily wages her husband earns, they could not afford to buy enough milk for their children to drink regularly. “The only milk that we ever got to have is that which is mixed in our tea.” That too was a once a day and clearly not enough.

Under PINS, Naila was eligible for a grant to purchase two goats, to boost the daily household consumption of dairy. This is the first time she has owned cattle, a valuable asset for rural households.

Naila takes this as a blessing and is committed to utilizing it for her children and in a first, herself. “I live for my children but I’ve also been made to realize by PINS that my health is important to if I am to see my children grow stronger. I didn’t have the taste for it, but now I drink it with my children regularly.” She is even trying to get her husband into the habit of drinking milk that is not mixed with tea.

Both her goats are currently pregnant and Naila looks forward to seeing her herd grow than selling them for quick cash. Knowing how important they are for providing for her family, she hopes to do the same and help out other families like hers by giving them milk that she is able to spare.

### Our Impact

- **Households reported an increase** in milk availability **by 1 Litre**
- **Milk consumption increased in children** under 5 **by 39%**
- **Milk consumption in pregnant and lactating women increased by 41%**
- **Male and baby goats increased by 18%**

- **Household cost savings on purchase of milk** **39%**
- **Increase in livestock asset/income** **54%**
- **Improvement in the availability and consumption of milk** **85%**
Improving Access to Poultry

Keeping poultry for rural household can mean a more diversified diet as a result of improved access to poultry sourced foods particularly eggs. When managed well, this can improve the availability of more eggs, helping some of these households earn a small income selling eggs to fellow community members impacting their consumption of eggs as well. Keeping this in mind, women with a minimum of 10 poultry birds were trained on poultry management and entrepreneurship. They were also given inputs including a cockrel to help set their small venture off and encouraged to re-invest to sustain it.

Our Progress So Far

- **9,753** Community-level poultry entrepreneurs trained on poultry management and entrepreneurship
- **9,689** Beneficiaries received inputs for poultry management
- **1,582** Poultry entrepreneurs were supported to build a model poultry cage

Shaheena Thrives as a Community Poultry Entrepreneur

Shaheena from VO Bhambhere, Thatta is a mother of two and a community poultry entrepreneur. Her husband’s income is irregular at best, making their financial situation even more precarious when there is wide-spread water scarcity.

Knowing what she faces, she’s even more determined to keep her poultry venture running. When PINS started, she had six chickens, but they would not lay eggs on most days because the breed was not local and struggled, even more so with the viruses that caused Shaheena to lose many of her birds.

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With the vaccinated cockerel Shaheena received as part of her inputs on completing her training as a community poultry entrepreneur, her chickens are producing up to eight eggs per day. She feeds most of them to her children while selling the rest for PKR 10 in the summer and doubling to PKR 20 in the winter. She makes an average of PKR 70 per day. On special occasions, she also sells her older chickens to community members. Since the Programme, she estimates that she is earning between PKR 4,000 to 6,000 per month.

PINS ER-3 trains the community poultry entrepreneurs at their respective village-level Farmer Field School by sessions conducted by Agriculture Entrepreneurs and CLEWs. Through these sessions, the poultry entrepreneurs learn about the basics of poultry management, which include breed improvement, feed management, cage requirements for layer and broiler birds, and how to market and sell eggs within the community.

Shaheena credits her success as a poultry entrepreneur to the training she received on poultry management and marketing. She became more perceptive to when they got ill and sought treatment. “Becoming a poultry entrepreneur has improved my life. I am more informed now about how to take better care of my birds now, which was a big problem for me previously.”

Our Impact

Community Poultry Entrepreneurs reported an increase in poultry birds by 5%.

85% of Community Poultry Entrepreneurs practiced the correct poultry management practices.

20 eggs produced on an average in a month.

9 eggs consumed by a CPE on an average in a month.

Improved availability of eggs/poultry meat at household level 70%.

Improved availability of eggs/poultry meat at community level 34%.
Many countries have successfully integrated aquaculture with rice agriculture. Growing fish in rice paddies utilizes the same piece of land to generate more nutrition than growing rice alone. It also reduces the need for inorganic fertilizers and pesticides by making use of biologically recycled nutrients and natural pest management. PINS piloted this approach by establishing 20 demonstration models to test and showcase integrated rice paddy/fish culture in four districts of Sindh (Thatta, Sujawal, Shikarpur, and Dadu). Farmers from surrounding areas were invited to visit and see these paddy fish farms and encouraged to replicate this in their fields with technical support (e.g. field design and layout, etc.) from PINS.

Sanam and her husband own 2 acres of land in VO Moorani in LSO Mehran, Shikarpur. For years, they’ve borne crop losses given that the land is prone to flooding due to its location - their field was at the foot of the hill. Water from the slope of the hill would travel down and accumulate in her field. A silver lining to this was that this land was an ideal site for paddy-fish farming.

The prerequisites for creating a paddy fish farm are simple. The water in the surrounding areas must be safe, particularly from arsenic so that it isn’t passed to people through fish. There are also some specifics to managing the paddy fish pond that would be covered through training that PINS designed as part of its pilot on paddy fish farming for community members interested in it. Lastly, fish farmers signing up as part of the pilot were also required to commit to selling a percentage of their produce to their community members.
Paddy fish farming plots established

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Improving the Availability of Fish through Paddy Fish Farming

Our Progress So Far

Paddy Fish Farming Opens up New Avenues for Earning for Sanam

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Our Impact

Sanam managed to pitch in with the expenses through the stitching and sewing orders she took from the community but they mostly depended on this land. With constant losses, she and her husband made a decision to participate in the pilot. They received PKR 44,000 to implement the suggested design and initiate the farming. They used an acre to produce rice and their first yield was clocked at 48 maunds, slightly higher than the previous year.

Their first experience with fish was below average and disappointing. Around 100 of their bigger fish died but that did not deter Sanam and her husband. Instead, they decided to give it another go, investing PKR 20,000 to dig up the paddy which would improve the fish’s survival rate. In time, the investment paid off, as they managed to sell the harvested fish for PKR 27,000. Charged by their success, they are planning to add 900 fish seeds in July, so that they can continue to sell fish to the community.

Sanam and her husband have become an inspiration to many, with members from their own VO and others coming to inquire about their experiences. With more income from the paddy fish farm, Sanam and her husband are choosing to put it towards a better diet for themselves and their family.

Our Impact

16 small farmers replicated this model

75% of farmers complied to the proposed design and process

An average of 1,500 KGs was harvested from each Paddy-Fish Farm

The yield of rice improved marginally by an average of 1.5 maund (60 Kg) per acre

On an average farmers earned PKR 92,000 from selling the harvested fish at subsidised rates
The Government of Sindh (GoS), through the Planning and Development Department, is implementing the Sindh Accelerated Action Plan for Reduction of Stunting and Malnutrition (AAP), with the objective of reducing the stunting rate in the province from the existing 48% to 30% in the first five years (by 2021) and to 15% by 2026 by increasing and expanding coverage of multi-sectoral interventions.

The European Union, under the EU Commission Action Plan on Nutrition (2014), is supporting the AAP through the comprehensive Programme for Improved Nutrition in Sindh (PINS).

PINS aims to sustainably improve the nutritional status of children under five (U5) and of pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in Sindh through nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions while capacitating the Government of Sindh so that it may efficiently implement its multi-sectoral nutrition policy.

PINS comprises of three components – Technical Assistance, Nutrition-specific and Nutrition-sensitive. RSPN is leading the Nutrition-sensitive (PINS 3) component which focuses on reducing water-borne diseases and improving food diversity through disaster-resilient WASH infrastructures and sustainable food production systems in rural areas of Sindh. It is working with four partners: Action Against Hunger (ACF), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Sindh Rural Support Programme (SRSO) and Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP).