

Livelihood Assistance Program

Case Study on Green House Project Nov 2009 – Feb 2010 Nomal, Gilgit Baltistan

Availability and easy access to fresh vegetables and fruits has always been a challenge in areas located at a high altitude especially in winters. All food being brought from Southern Pakistan becomes very expensive when it reaches the markets at Nomal village and Gilgit city. Many villagers due to their poor living conditions and lack of resources are not able to go to these markets and cannot buy fresh vegetables regularly. This adversely affects the health of low-income families who largely depend on dried, staple vegetables stored during winters and therefore do not have a supply of fresh food, causing the families to suffer from malnutrition and other health related problems. OSDI, realizing the gap in the village, came up with a solution of constructing a green house so that the villagers can grow their own seedlings and vegetables in the off-season and have easy access to fresh produce. This reduces their expenditure by decreasing the number of trips to a city to buy fresh vegetables and also enables them to improve their health.

Malik Shah is a fifty year old teacher trained by Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) 20 years ago on how to set up a green house. He was, however, unable to maintain it due to lack of resources.

A Green House Project, spanning over a period of four months, was designed under the OSDI Livelihood Assistance Program. The project was initiated with the goal of providing an opportunity to generate an additional source of income by utilizing previously learned skills and techniques and facilitating access fresh produce. This not only improves their health but also their means of income so that they can eventually come out of poverty. The other motivating factors behind initiating this project in the area were:

- To enable the farmer to grow three crops per year on his field;
- To enable the surrounding farmers to grow 3 instead of 2 crops in a year with the excess seedlings grown; and
- To utilize the already available training to the farmer to increase the yield on his crop as well as on the surrounding fields.

With an interest free loan of Rs. 13,550 to Malik Shah, a green house was constructed to provide an opportunity to grow vegetables all year round. This would also provide additional vegetable and seeds that can easily be grown at a certain temperature in a green house.

According to the estimated calculations, Malik Shah was expected to earn between Rs. 42,250 and Rs. 51,550 over a period of ten months on the production of vegetables and seedlings. He was earning Rs. 15,500 per month before the intervention and if he would have continued with the project, his total income would have seen an increase of Rs. 4,425 per month to a total of Rs 19,925 per month. But the project did not go as planned due to unpredictable weather conditions such as heavy rain fall, cloudy weather and flood warnings at Hunza Lake. All these factors not only affected the drying process of fruits like apricots and mulberries but also affected the production and sale of the seedlings. Only 25% of the seedlings were sold because the villagers preferred to buy wheat seeds instead to cater to the anticipated shortfall in supply. Also a few families left the village to shift to relief camps for safety.

Despite all these obstacles, Malik Shah generated an income of Rs. 9,100 from the green house during the course of five months. The project provided him an opportunity to construct a fully functioning green house and reap its benefits for years to come. He now has a continuous source of additional income and is confident that he will be able to overcome his poor living conditions. The project empowered him to utilize his skills and generate additional income.

The project is a model for the villagers to learn from Malik and use the same technique to generate income to come out of poverty. The functional green house is a practical example for the villagers to have access to fresh vegetables and new seeds, so that they can grow and cultivate their own produce and utilize the opportunity to enhance their income.

The impact of the green house project is not only on raising the income levels and overcome poverty, but the locals can have access to fresh vegetables at a lower price all year round. This will help them improve their diet and minimize diseases and malnutrition.

Green House Construction Phases

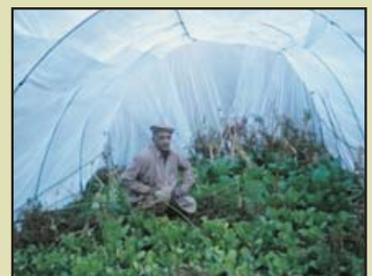


Green House Construction Place



Malik Shah with his son fixing iron rods

Completed Green House



Malik Shah sitting inside his Green House



Green House Completed