

BEYOND LOCAL BOUNDARIES

Stories of Entrepreneurs Growing Beyond Local Markets





BEYOND LOCAL BOUNDARIES

Stories of Entrepreneurs Growing Beyond Local Markets

This booklet is dedicated to the women and men entrepreneurs who believed in their potential and built enterprises that now reach beyond local boundaries.



Strengthening Participatory Organization - SPO

Building 1B, Street 26, Sector G-9/1, Islamabad, Pakistan

Tel: +92 51 111 357 111, 8736194

E-Fax: +92 51 8444904

SPO © 2025



Table of Contents

Mr. Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation, EUD Pakistan		viii
International Trade Center		x
Mr. Nadir Gul Barech, Chief Executive Officer, PPAF		xi
Ms. Arifa Mazhar, Chief Executive, SPO		xiii
About SPO		xv
1.	The Journey of Balochi Madar A Story of Value Addition in the Date Industry	1
2.	A Farmer who Used Opportunity to Build a Stronger Future Abdul Rasheed	5
3.	Improving Date Packaging and Building a Stronger Business in District Kech Hafiz Bijjar	7
4.	Modernizing a Traditional Date Business in District Kech Mohammad Assa	9
5.	A Journey of Transformation Muhammad Saleem, Panjgur Dates Centre	11
6.	Growing Subhan Dates Farm Nazia’s Journey of Steady Progress	13
7.	Journey of Growth in Goat Farming Sammi Gul	15
8.	Tooba Dates Merchant Hafiz Abdul Wahab	17
9.	Transforming Dairy and Goat Farming Bashir Ahmed, Menaz Buleda, Kech	19
10.	Empowering Entrepreneurs Imdad Ali’s Journey of Growth	21
11.	Celebrating Local Excellence Ishaq Saleh’s Achievement at the Khalifa Dates Festival	23

12.	Building a Sustainable Future Jameela's Teddy Goat Farm	25
13.	Advancing Agriculture Muhammad Rafique's Sustainable Farming Model	27
14.	From Tradition to Transformation Mohammad Yousaf's Date Enterprise	29
15.	Excellence Recognized Haji Sagheer Ahmed at the Pakistan International Date Palm Festival	31
16.	From Farmer to Agripreneur The Journey of Haji Ahmed Ali	35
17.	A Woman's Vision for Change Arifa Bibi's Hirfat Goat Farm	37
18.	Empowered Resilience The Inspiring Journey of Gul Bibi	39
19.	A Journey of Courage and Growth Hawa Sakhi's Poultry and Goat Farming Success	41
20.	Excellence in Innovation Muhammad Jan's Success at the Khalifa Dates Festival	45
21.	Building a Sustainable Future Mussadiq Aziz and Shams ul Rehman Goat Farm	49
22.	Empowering Women in Livestock Farming Tako's Journey of Strength and Sustainability	51
23.	Breaking Barriers in Agriculture Waheeda's Rise as a Female Entrepreneur	53





Mr. Jeroen Willems

Head of Cooperation, EUD Pakistan

The European Union particularly commends the implementation of the GRASP project in both Balochistan and Sindh. Through its financial contribution, the European Union has supported thousands of rural entrepreneurs and farmers particularly women in turning innovation into opportunity, creating jobs, strengthening markets, and laying the foundations for a greener rural economy. We believe that GRASP stands as a strong example of how partnership between the European Union and Pakistan can drive sustainable growth and transform local livelihoods.

It is encouraging to witness what the European Union, together with International Trade Centre (ITC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), and its partners, including SPO, has achieved on the ground supporting SME growth, strengthening agricultural and livestock value chains, enhancing access to finance, and creating employment opportunities in underserved areas. Through targeted support such as matching grants, the programme enables entrepreneurs to transform ideas into viable businesses, acting as seeds of change across rural economies.

The European Union remains a steadfast partner in promoting inclusive and sustainable development in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan. GRASP combines policy support with practical interventions, including farmer business schools, market linkages, and improved access to finance, ensuring that opportunities reach those who need them most.

We would also like to acknowledge the exceptional commitment and resilience of PPAF and its Partner Organizations including SPO, whose role has been vital in delivering results under some of the most challenging circumstances. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the devastating floods of 2022 and 2025, and in areas affected by security constraints particularly in Balochistan, these organizations including SPO ensured continuity of support to communities, often operating in difficult and high-risk environments. Their dedication, local presence, and deep community engagement have been instrumental in sustaining programme momentum and ensuring that no one is left behind.

What makes GRASP particularly impactful is its ability to show that, with the right support, rural entrepreneurs can innovate, create jobs, and contribute to broader economic growth. The expansion of matching grant cycles reflects both strong demand and tangible results.

We warmly congratulate all entrepreneurs and beneficiaries featured in this publication. Their perseverance, creativity, and commitment are at the heart of this success. The European Union looks forward to seeing these enterprises grow further and continue contributing to resilient local economies and thriving communities.

Mr. Jeroen Willems

Head of Cooperation, EUD Pakistan

International Trade Center

These stories are a reminder that real transformation begins with people, their resilience, their ideas, and their determination to grow beyond limitations. Across Balochistan, entrepreneurs have turned small opportunities into sustainable businesses, creating livelihoods not just for themselves, but for their communities. At ITC, we are proud to have partnered with committed local organizations such as SPO, whose deep community engagement and on-ground expertise have played an important role in the successful implementation of GRASP. These partnerships have ensured that support reaches where it is needed most, in a way that is responsive, inclusive, and sustainable. Our role has been to enable this journey by connecting SMEs to knowledge, markets, and opportunity. What stands out is not only business growth, but the confidence and ambition these entrepreneurs now carry forward.



Mr. Nadir Gul Barech
Chief Executive Officer, PPAF

The Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) project, funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Trade Centre in collaboration with PPAF, FAO, SMEDA, and our valued Partner Organizations, stands as a strong testament to the transformative power of inclusive, market-driven development.

At PPAF, we take pride in being part of this impactful journey one that has strengthened value chains, enhanced enterprise competitiveness, and enabled small and medium enterprises including farmers and primary producers, to move beyond local boundaries, access wider national and global markets, and contribute to Pakistan's export potential.

This publication, "Beyond Local Boundaries: Stories of Entrepreneurs Growing Beyond Local Markets," is more than a compilation of success stories. It reflects resilience, innovation, and determination, highlighting how targeted interventions in horticulture and livestock value chains have translated into tangible improvements in livelihoods across Sindh and Balochistan.

We particularly acknowledge and appreciate the remarkable efforts of our Partner Organizations, especially SPO, whose strong field presence has been instrumental in mobilizing communities, strengthening enterprises, and documenting these inspiring journeys. Their work in districts such as Kech and Panjgur often carried out amid challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, recurring floods, and complex security dynamics demonstrates exceptional commitment and resilience. It reflects how effective local engagement, combined with technical support and market linkages, can unlock sustainable economic opportunities even in the most difficult contexts.

The stories presented in this book from value-added date enterprises to livestock innovations illustrate how access to finance, improved packaging, modern technologies, and business development support can transform traditional livelihoods into competitive and resilient businesses. They also reflect a critical shift towards enterprise formalization and professionalism, where strengthened capacities enable MSMEs to operate more efficiently, access formal markets, and sustain growth beyond project support. Importantly, these stories highlight the vital role of women and youth as drivers of inclusive economic growth.

GRASP legacy extends beyond measurable outputs. It has contributed to building a more inclusive rural economy, strengthened institutional partnerships, informed market systems and policy approaches, and demonstrated scalable models for value chain development, climate resilience, and gender-responsive growth.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the European Union for its continued support, to ITC for its leadership and technical assistance, and to all partners particularly SPO and other Partner Organizations in Balochistan and Sindh whose dedication turned vision into reality.

As GRASP concludes, its impact endures through these stories, reminding us that with the right support, rural SMEs and entrepreneurs can drive Pakistan’s journey towards sustainable and shared prosperity, while laying a strong foundation for future efforts to scale inclusive economic development.

Mr. Nadir Gul Barech
Chief Executive Officer, PPAF



Ms. Arifa Mazhar
Chief Executive, SPO

I begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the SMEs of District Kech and District Panjgur who welcomed us into their businesses and placed their trust in this partnership. This project is one of our flagship initiatives, and I extend my sincere appreciation, first of all, to all SMEs, as well as to the European Union, ITC, FAO, and PPAF for leading the GRASP programme and enabling meaningful transformation across rural Balochistan. In particular, I extend special thanks to PPAF’s leadership, Mr. Nadir Gul Barech, for his continued guidance, commitment, and leadership, which played an important role in steering the programme towards effective and sustainable outcomes. As a long-term partner, SPO worked across two of the most challenging districts; Kech and Panjgur, mobilizing rural communities, strengthening value chains, and supporting enterprise development across dates, goats, poultry, and onion clusters.

Under the GRASP overall programme implemented by PPAF, significant progress has been achieved across Pakistan, demonstrating strong outreach, financial inclusion, and enterprise development outcomes. Under the programme, a total of 45,726 SMEs were identified. Through matching grants support, 399 SMEs received PKR 1.319 billion. In addition, access to finance was strengthened, as 520 SMEs were successfully linked with financial institutions and banks, receiving total financial support amounting to PKR 1.124 billion.

The GRASP Project has made substantial contributions toward enterprise growth, sustainability, financial access, and institutional strengthening, reinforcing its impact on MSME development and economic resilience across Pakistan. This journey, from community mobilization to national expos and international showcases, including global date festivals and regional market linkages, has enriched SPO’s learning and strengthened our confidence. With this experience, SPO is ready to design, scale, and implement enterprise development and value chain strengthening programmes not only in Balochistan but also in other regions of Pakistan where similar opportunities exist.

At the end, I would like to acknowledge that this could not have been achieved without the dedicated, committed, and hard-working team of SPO at all levels. Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to all the SMEs for permitting us to intervene in their ongoing businesses, and for their trust, resilience, cooperation, and hard work, without which this transformation would not have been possible.

Ms. Arifa Mazhar
Chief Executive, SPO



International Trade Centre
SPO
SHAMS UR REHMAN GOAT FARM
(SMC PVT LTD) DISTRICT PANJGUR
CLIMATE RESILIENT SHED
MATCHING GRANT: 2.5 MILLION (PKR)
SME SHARE: 0.705 MILLION (PKR)
GRASP
GROWTH FOR RURAL ADVANCEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS
PROJECT IS SUPPORTING POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN
BALUCHISTAN THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs)

About SPO

Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) is a rights and responsibilities-based organization serving to improve the well-being of the communities of Pakistan by making them aware of their basic rights and ensuring access to attain those. It is registered under Section 42 of the Companies Act 2017.

Values

We strongly believe in the values of mutual trust, innovation, volunteerism, inclusivity, adaptability, accountability and environmental sensitivity.

Vision

We envision “a democratic, socially just and ecologically sustainable society.”

Mission

To support and strengthen disadvantaged communities and public interest institutions for sustainable development.

Main Thematic Areas:

- Social & Economic Development
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Cultural Heritage and Tourism Promotion
- Digital Knowledge Transformation

Women rights and Digital Knowledge Transformation are cross-cutting themes

Programmatic Portfolio:

Since 1994 SPO has served 25 million people. It has implemented 449 projects with a total budget of PKR 16 billion / USD 56 million, including 70 humanitarian projects worth PKR 2.725 billion, supported by 105 financial partners.

Our broad programmatic portfolio and extensive countrywide presence is truly embodied in our footprints in 124 of Pakistan's 166 districts, with a current presence in more than 58 districts. We have dynamic teams, based in 9 Regional Offices (Balochistan - Quetta & Turbat, KP - Peshawar, Punjab - Lahore & Multan, Sindh - Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Shikarpur) and 20 project offices in all four provinces and the Federal Capital. These teams work with a diverse spectrum of groups, from grassroots communities to various tiers of governance at local, district, provincial, and national levels.

As a Management Organization:

As the organization continues to evolve, it has undergone a transformational journey from an implementing organization to one that blends both implementation and management portfolio. Historically, SPO has been working as an implementing organization by delivering projects directly. However, institutional strengthening remains a challenge for many organizations, and this is where SPO plays a critical role in bridging the gap between funders and CSOs by exhibiting its capacity to perform as an intermediary body.



Makran Dates and Sweets Production in Kech.



"I want Balochi Madar to become a leading brand and to inspire more women to step into business."

Arifa Saleh

Success Story-01

The Journey of Balochi Madar

A Story of Value Addition in the Date Industry



In the dry Mekran region, 27-year-old Arifa Saleh started Balochi Madar in 2021 with only PKR 50,000 and the support of her husband, Jahanzaib. She began creating value-added date products such as Plain Madar, Badami Madar, Akhroti Madar, Mix Dry Fruit Madar, Muzawati, Begum Jangi with cashew, and Madar Cupcakes. "I wanted our dates to be seen as something special," she says.

Despite her creativity, Arifa struggled with manual labour, high costs, inconsistent supply of date paste, and limited market reach. Her business needed machinery, better branding, and stronger systems to grow.

Connecting with the GRASP Project was a turning point. With support from the SPO GRASP team, she registered her business, improved processing and packaging, strengthened marketing, and adopted proper record-keeping. These steps helped stabilise her enterprise and plan for future expansion.

Arifa now aims to buy processing machinery, expand into e-commerce and international markets, and increase her team (currently four women and two men). Her determination has turned a small home-based idea into a growing SME that supports local livelihoods—especially for women.





“The grant helped me improve my business and build a better future for my family”.

Abdul Rasheed

Success Story-02

A Farmer who Used Opportunity to Build a Stronger Future

Abdul Rasheed



Abdul Rasheed, a farmer from UC Khuda Badan, Panjgur, supported a family of twelve but struggled to expand his date business due to limited resources and outdated equipment. Despite years of effort, growth remained out of reach.

His situation changed when he received a PKR 0.5 million matching grant through the GRASP Project. He invested in equipment, packaging materials, and promotional items, improving quality, organisation, and visibility. “The grant gave me the push I needed,” he says.

His earnings rose from PKR 135,000 to PKR 220,000, and new linkages with dealers in Karachi and Sukkur strengthened his market access. He now guides other farmers, sharing what he has learned.

Abdul Rasheed’s journey shows how the right support and steady effort can transform a small business and strengthen a family’s future.



“Good packaging and the right guidance helped me improve my business and reach more customers.”

Hafiz Bijjar

Success Story-03

Improving Date Packaging and Building a Stronger Business in District Kech

Hafiz Bijjar

Thirty-six-year-old Hafiz Bijjar from UC Menaz, Buleda, continued his family’s tradition of date farming through his enterprise, Buladi Date Supplier. But his products were packed in large 20–40 kg bags that were hard to carry and unattractive for retail buyers.

In 2024, he received a PKR 0.5 million grant from GRASP. With SPO’s guidance, he upgraded packaging and labeling and adopted vacuum sealing machinery. “Proper packaging changed how customers saw my work,” he says.

Buladi Date Supplier now sells hygienic 400g, 800g, and 1kg packs in varieties like Begum Jangi, Alani, Gowana, Muzawarti, Apdandan, and Shakar, with competitive pricing. Hafiz also manages a farm of 600 date trees, ensuring consistent supply.

His team grew to six permanent workers (including two women) plus seasonal labour, and he purchases dates from local growers at fair prices.

Hafiz’s progress shows how improved packaging and market linkages can transform a traditional business.

*“Modern packaging
and proper training
helped me expand
and improve my
date business.”*

Mohammad Assa



Success Story-04

Modernizing a Traditional Date Business in District Kech

Mohammad Assa



Fifty-four-year-old Mohammad Assa from UC Sami, Kech, managed 150–200 date trees but struggled with slow traditional methods, bulk packaging, a short shelf life, and limited markets. His products were packed in Balochi Pat and Pachak, which restricted sales.

A PKR 0.5 million GRASP grant helped him introduce vacuum packaging and shift to gram-based boxes. “Better packaging changed how people viewed my product,” he says.

Assa expanded into Karachi, Quetta, and Makran markets after receiving training in business management and marketing. His workforce grew from two to four workers, with seasonal labour added as needed.

He now sells popular Begum Jangi in 200g, 400g, and 800g packs and improved his date paste product by shifting from 20-liter tins to 1-liter packs, lowering the price and increasing demand. He also introduced value-added date products.

Assa’s progress reflects how modern tools and improved skills can make traditional farming more competitive.



“This support improved date quality and increased sales and profitability. I am grateful for the opportunity to grow my business.”

Muhammad Saleem

Success Story-05

A Journey of Transformation

Muhammad Saleem
Panjgur Dates Centre



Founded in 2015, Panjgur Dates Centre (PDC) supported local farmers but struggled with an outdated 25-ton cold storage system, weak cooling, and unreliable solar energy—affecting quality and shelf life.

Provided a PKR 2.5 million grant to upgrade to a solar-powered cold storage facility capable of safely preserving dates for two years.

Impact was immediate:

- Sales increased from PKR 2,000,000 (2022) to PKR 4,600,000
- Net profit grew from PKR 200,000 to PKR 628,000
- Employment increased from 10 to 16 workers

PDC staff received business training and showcased products at four promotional events, including World Expo 2023. Digital tools such as WhatsApp and Facebook expanded nationwide delivery.

PDC now stands as a resilient, sustainable enterprise supporting growers across Panjgur.



“The support helped me organise my work, improve my packaging, and reach more customers.”

Nazia

Success Story-06

Growing Subhan Dates Farm

Nazia's Journey of Steady Progress



Nazia from Panjgur ran Subhan Dates Farm with limited packaging, minimal branding, and basic market access. Her business supported her family but lacked the structure to grow.

A PKR 0.5 million GRASP matching grant allowed her to purchase crates, cartons, nets, and hygienic storage materials. Better packaging improved quality and presentation, increasing customer trust.

She hired two labourers, created simple branding (visiting cards, stickers), and strengthened her market presence. Nazia now guides other women entrepreneurs, encouraging them to start their own ventures.

With organised operations and improved outreach, she has positioned her farm for long-term growth while uplifting other women.



"I have built a source of income for myself and helped other women start their own businesses."

Sammi Gul

Success Story-07

Journey of Growth in Goat Farming

Sammi Gul



Thirty-five-year-old Sammi Gul from rural Balochistan wanted to build financial independence for her family and other local women. Opportunities were limited, but she was determined.

Through GRASP in 2022, she attended a three-day business plan development training, refined her goals, and received a PKR 0.5 million matching grant. She invested in livestock, feed, veterinary care, packaging, a cooling machine, and value-addition tools—improving efficiency and product quality.

As her business grew, Sammi began mentoring other women, helping them start small enterprises. Her work now supports local women's economic participation.

Her journey shows how training, resources, and determination can transform rural livelihoods.

Empowering Youth for a Brighter Tomorrow

بااختیار نوجوان، روشن



طوبی
کھجور
مرچنٹ

*"Better packaging
and solar energy
helped us grow."*

Hafiz Abdul Wahab

Success Story-08

Tooba Dates Merchant

Hafiz Abdul Wahab



Hafiz Abdul Wahab's business in Panjgur struggled for years with unreliable electricity, manual processing, and poor packaging, which limited sales despite high-quality dates.

With a PKR 2.5 million GRASP grant, he built a modern storage and processing unit and installed a solar system. He added machinery for date paste and seed powder and launched upgraded branding as Tooba Dates.

Improved hygiene, packaging, and product lines expanded his market to Quetta, Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Attock, while online delivery boosted nationwide sales. His workforce grew from two to six workers, including women.

Income rose sharply—from PKR 1.8 million (2021) to PKR 7 million (2024), and profits increased from PKR 300,000 to PKR 2.4 million.

"This project gave me knowledge, confidence, and a future for my children."

Bashir Ahmed



Success Story-09

Transforming Dairy and Goat Farming

Bashir Ahmed
Menaz Buleda, Kech



In Menaz Buleda, Kech, Bashir Ahmed relied on traditional goat farming and dairy products but faced spoilage due to unreliable electricity and basic packaging. He could only sell locally, keeping income seasonal and limited.

A PKR 0.5 million GRASP grant enabled him to introduce improved goat breeds, install a solar system, and buy a deep freezer—allowing safe storage and better hygiene. He shifted to clean, branded packaging, expanding his market to Kech, Turbat, and Quetta.

His workforce grew to five workers (including two women). Income increased from PKR 175,000 (2022) to PKR 485,000 (2024), with PKR 542,000 earned by March 2025 alone. His ghee now sells for PKR 2,000/kg due to better quality.

With SPO guidance, he strengthened operations, and his success encouraged others to adopt modern techniques.





“The GRASP project transformed my business and my family’s livelihood. It has given our community hope for a better future.”

Imdad Ali

Success Story-10

Empowering Entrepreneurs

Imdad Ali’s Journey of Growth



In Chamagan, District Kech Turbat, thirty year old Imdad Ali turned a small family income source into a growing business. He started with a rented cart in Gwadar selling a few bags of dates, but limited tools, no machinery and no access to wider markets kept him from expanding.

His progress began when the GRASP project reached his village. After submitting his business model, he received a matching grant of PKR 500,000. He purchased vacuum and date sealing machines, packing materials and received training in modern processing. These upgrades allowed him to grade and package dates professionally, immediately improving quality and value.

With better packaging and training, he reduced losses, saved time and reached larger markets. He now sells beyond Turbat to coastal areas, Karachi and other major cities. Improved labeling and presentation helped him compete with established sellers and earn higher prices.

Today, Imdad runs a stable and growing business that supports his family and shows how timely support and determination can uplift entire communities.

“Winning this award has motivated me to work even harder. The support I received improved my products and gave me confidence to present them nationally.”

Ishaq Saleh



Success Story-11

Celebrating Local Excellence

Ishaq Saleh's Achievement at the Khalifa Dates Festival



Ishaq Saleh, an innovative entrepreneur from District Kech, achieved national recognition when he won the First Prize for the Best Production of the Begum Jhangi variety at the Khalifa First Dates International Festival in Karachi. His achievement was celebrated by senior officials, including the Governor of Sindh, the Chief Minister, and the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates.

Ishaq is a recipient of a matching grant through the GRASP project, which supported him in adopting modern production methods and improving packaging and product development. With this support, he introduced new value-added items, such as date coffee and date syrup, along with attractive, high-quality packaging that helped his products stand out in the market.

His business now reflects a blend of innovation, quality, and modern branding, which has elevated local date products to national and international platforms. The guidance and regular field support he received strengthened his skills and helped him compete with producers across Pakistan.

Ishaq's success has inspired many others in the agricultural value chain. His journey shows how modern practices, creativity, and the right support can unlock new opportunities for rural farmers and entrepreneurs. His achievement at the festival brought pride to his community and demonstrated the strong potential of Balochistan's date sector.

A woman wearing a light-colored headscarf with a floral pattern is leaning over a long metal feeding trough. Several goats, mostly white with some brown and black patches, are gathered around the trough, eating. The background shows a wall made of concrete blocks with some green paint. The ground is dirt.

“Before the grant, managing my goats was difficult. After the support, my farm grew, my income improved, and I can now support my children’s education.”

Jameela

Success Story-12

Building a Sustainable Future

Jameela’s Teddy Goat Farm

Jameela from Absor in District Kech has been running a small goat farm for more than twenty years. She relied on local breeds and traditional methods, and with no proper shelter and low milk production, she faced frequent losses during hot and rainy seasons. Her income stayed low and she struggled to support her children’s education.

Her situation changed in 2024 when she received a PKR 500,000 grant through the GRASP project with support from SPO. She purchased high quality Teddy goats and built a proper shelter that protected the herd from extreme weather. She also received training in feed management, disease control and marketing.

The results were immediate. Her herd became healthier, milk production increased and she began selling more goats at better prices. She previously sold only five to seven goats a year but now sells ten to fifteen. Her annual milk production reached fourteen thousand three hundred litres, giving her a reliable income. She can now afford private school and college fees for her children and provide clean milk to families in her community.

Jameela’s journey shows how targeted support and training can turn a struggling small farm into a strong and sustainable business.



"By improving my farm and adopting better techniques, I have been able to grow my business and support my community. I want other farmers to learn from this experience and achieve the same success."

Muhammad Rafique

Success Story-13

Advancing Agriculture

Muhammad Rafique's Sustainable Farming Model



Muhammad Rafique, the owner of Rafique Kajoor Farm in Garibabad Tasp, has spent over two decades building a well-known agricultural enterprise. With more than five hundred and ninety date palm trees spread across five acres, he grows a wide range of varieties, including Muzawati, Kahraba, and Jawan Suhr. Alongside date farming, Rafique also operates a livestock business, selling fresh milk and yoghurt every day to local households.

Despite his dedication, Rafique faced challenges such as unpredictable weather, pests, and changing market prices. His farm needed better protection and modern techniques to continue growing. Support through the GRASP project helped him address these gaps. He introduced improved packaging and branding for his dates and invested in bunch covers to protect the fruit from pests and damage. This led to better quality produce, reduced losses, and higher sales.

Rafique's livestock operations also strengthened his income during off-season months. His farm now serves as a model for modern and sustainable farming, attracting local farmers who visit to learn from his methods. He offers affordable dairy products and creates employment opportunities during harvest seasons, contributing to the wellbeing of his community.

He is now planning to expand his market reach through online platforms and explore regional exports. His vision includes training younger farmers and promoting sustainable techniques that benefit both livelihoods and the environment.

“Success in business is not only about good products. It is about passion, dedication, and the willingness to improve. This journey has shown me how commitment and hard work can turn a simple idea into a successful business.”

Mohammad Yousaf

Success Story-14

From Tradition to Transformation

Mohammad Yousaf's
Date Enterprise

For more than twenty years, Mohammad Yousaf has been a well-known name in the date industry of Kalatuk, Turbat. He produces and markets several varieties, including Begum Jangi, Goganna, and Shakar. Over time, he introduced value-added products such as date paste, syrup, and chowara, which gained popularity locally and in nearby cities. However, his business growth was held back by limited market access, basic packaging, and the lack of modern machinery.

In 2022, the GRASP project brought new opportunities for him. With training and expert guidance, he developed a strong business plan and secured a matching grant of two million five hundred thousand rupees. The support helped him acquire modern machinery, improve packaging and labeling, and upgrade his production facilities.

These advancements improved the quality and appearance of his products, making them more competitive in larger markets. As a result, he expanded from Turbat to coastal areas and other cities in Pakistan. With improved value addition, he now sells higher-quality products at better prices, enabling him to provide better living conditions, healthcare, and education for his family.

Continuous guidance from SPO helped him refine his business strategy and explore new opportunities. Participation in events such as the Date Expo expanded his market visibility. His journey shows how innovation, determination, and the right support can transform a traditional business into a thriving enterprise.



"This support helped me improve quality and reach new markets. Winning this award encouraged me to work even harder and represent our local dates proudly."

Haji Sagheer Ahmed

Success Story-15

Excellence Recognized

Haji Sagheer Ahmed at the Pakistan International Date Palm Festival



Haji Sagheer Ahmed from District Panjgur achieved national recognition when he won the First Prize for the best Muzawati dates at the Pakistan International Date Palm Festival. His achievement was celebrated by senior officials from Sindh and the United Arab Emirates, highlighting the strength of his work in the dates sector.

Sagheer received a matching grant of 30 million through the GRASP project, which enabled him to establish a state-of-the-art production unit and a cold storage facility with a capacity of two hundred tons. The improved infrastructure helped him adopt modern processing and attractive, international-standard packaging. His focus on quality has elevated his business and opened new opportunities in the local and national market.

His success reflects the impact of hard work, innovation, and strong collaboration. His journey also shows the potential of Balochistan's dates industry. Sagheer's achievement has inspired entrepreneurs and farmers across the region to pursue modern production methods and improved quality standards.





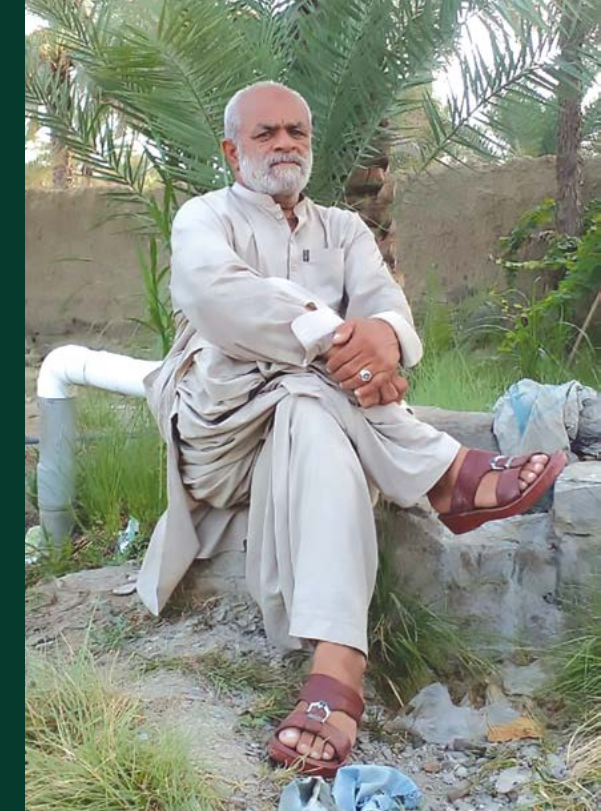
“When I started, I only knew how to grow dates, not how to sell them. With the support I received, my business changed completely. Now I can proudly say I run a modern and growing date enterprise.”

Haji Ahmed Ali

Success Story-16

From Farmer to Agripreneur

The Journey of Haji Ahmed Ali



Haji Ahmed Ali from Solo Buleda in District Kech spent twenty years in the Royal Oman Army before returning home in 1999 to start a date farm. With his savings, he planted twenty five varieties including Begum Jangi, Hussani, Rabi and Shakar. His farm eventually expanded to twelve acres with around nine hundred date trees. Despite his effort, he struggled due to poor packaging, difficult road access and dependence on middlemen who paid very low rates. He recalls selling large bundles for only fifteen hundred to two thousand rupees.

He wanted to improve his business but lacked knowledge and resources. His progress began when he connected with SPO under the GRASP project. After completing business training, he received a matching grant of PKR 2.5 million to modernize his farm.

With this support, he built a storage and processing unit and purchased vacuum packaging machines, trays and stands. These upgrades helped him introduce value added products such as date powder, syrup, paste and dry fruit blends. Attractive five hundred gram and one kilogram packs improved quality and shelf life and helped him access better markets. His premium Begum Jangi dates now sell at much higher prices. Participation in exhibitions further increased his visibility and strengthened his business.

What began as a small date farm has now grown into a modern agribusiness driven by his determination and the timely support he received.

“I never thought I would succeed, but GRASP gave me the chance to prove myself. I want women to believe in their abilities. With support and hard work, we can change our lives.”

Arifa Bibi



Success Story-17

A Woman's Vision for Change

Arifa Bibi's Hirfat Goat Farm



Arifa Bibi from UC Sarikoran, District Panjgur, is a mother of six who built her goat farming business despite financial difficulties and limited market access. With hard work and determination, she managed a small herd, but low income and poor shelter limited her progress. She dreamed of expanding but lacked the resources to improve her farm.

Her opportunity came through the GRASP project with support from SPO. With a five hundred thousand rupee grant, Arifa constructed a proper shed, improved hygiene, and strengthened the health and productivity of her goats. The number of goats on her farm grew from six to ninety. She began producing milk, yogurt, and desi ghee, selling both livestock and dairy products locally. Her annual sales now reach around one million two hundred thousand rupees, with earnings of approximately forty-five thousand rupees per month.

Arifa also uses goat manure as organic fertilizer for her twenty date trees and vegetable garden, producing food for both home use and the market. The growth of her business has empowered her to support her husband, educate her children, and run her household with confidence. She is now seen as a role model for women in her community.



Success Story-18

Empowered Resilience

The Inspiring Journey of Gul Bibi



In UC Shahrak, District Kech, sixty-year-old Gul Bibi has built a remarkable livelihood through goat farming. She began her journey at the age of twenty-four when her husband moved to the UAE for work. To support her large family, she started with four goats and produced milk, butter, and meat for household use and sale. Over the years, she reinvested earnings into better breeds and slowly expanded her herd.

Despite harsh weather, livestock diseases, and raising ten children alone, Gul Bibi never gave up. Through discipline and savings, she purchased land, built a raw shed, and steadily increased her herd to almost two hundred goats. Her children grew up with the support of her earnings, with one becoming an engineer and another joining the Levies Force.

When she learned about GRASP, she applied and received a five hundred thousand rupee grant to construct a safe shelter and a clean water pond for her goats. The upgraded facilities protected her herd from weather and wild animals, reducing losses and improving productivity. Her business now supports her family and inspires women across the region.

“My journey was full of hardships, but I never stopped working. With the support I received, I can now protect my animals and grow my business. I want other women to see that they can achieve anything with determination.”

Gul Bibi



"I was told women have no place in farming, but I never gave up. With support and learning, I built a successful poultry farm. Now young girls look up to me, and they believe they can succeed too."

Hawa Sakhi

Success Story-19

A Journey of Courage and Growth

Hawa Sakhi's Poultry and Goat Farming Success



Hawa Sakhi from Balochistan built her business by challenging traditional norms. With a Master's degree in Education and a deep interest in livestock, she began her poultry farm with only fifteen chicks. Community members doubted her, saying farming was not a woman's profession, but she continued with determination.

Over five years, she expanded her flock to more than five hundred chicks despite financial instability and limited resources. Her turning point came when she received a two million five hundred thousand rupee grant through the GRASP project. With this support, she built a climate-resilient poultry shed and expanded her flock to one thousand chicks. She also began hiring local women, giving them income opportunities and confidence.

With a focus on sustainability, she uses organic feed, manages waste responsibly, and practices water-efficient farming. Her farm is now recognized as an ethical and environmentally friendly business and serves as an inspiration to young women across Balochistan.







Success Story-20

Excellence in Innovation

Muhammad Jan's Success at the Khalifa Dates Festival



Muhammad Jan from District Panjgur achieved national recognition when he won the First Prize for the Best Production of the Muzafati variety at the Khalifa First Dates International Festival in Karachi. His achievement was celebrated by senior officials including the Governor of Sindh, the Chief Minister, and the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, who awarded him a cash prize and acknowledged his contributions to the dates sector.

With support from the GRASP project, Muhammad Jan received a matching grant of 30 million that enabled him to expand his business and introduce modern value-added products. He developed date coffee, date chips, date syrup, and visually appealing packaging that met international standards. These improvements helped him enter larger markets, increase product value, and build a strong brand identity for his enterprise.

His success shows how innovation, quality, and the right support can elevate local products to national platforms. Muhammad Jan's progress continues to inspire farmers and entrepreneurs across Balochistan, proving that with determination and opportunity, rural businesses can achieve remarkable growth.





“Success is not just about resources but about resilience. Innovation and support turned my small idea into a thriving enterprise. This achievement motivates me to work even harder.”

Muhammad Jan

Transforming a Small Enterprise:

The Growth of Baloch Hamza Brothers

Muhammad Jan began his date packaging business in 2008 with a modest investment of two hundred thousand rupees. Initially, he focused on cleaning and packaging dates for local markets, but limited storage, basic infrastructure, and lack of value addition kept his business from growing. Without cold storage, his products spoiled during peak seasons, and he had only one laborer to manage increasing workloads. He wanted to compete in larger markets but lacked modern equipment, branding, and product diversity.

In 2021, he approached SPO under the GRASP project and applied for support through the matching grant cycle. After a thorough process, he received a grant of thirty million rupees that transformed his entire operation. With this support, he built a modern cold storage facility, introduced new processing units, and expanded his product line to include date chocolate bars, date syrup, and date chips. These innovations opened new markets, improved product life, and increased profitability.

Improved branding and marketing strategies helped Baloch Hamza Brothers enter both local and international markets. The expanded business created new jobs and supported local date farmers by purchasing their produce. His progress demonstrates how large-scale transformation is possible when innovation is combined with guidance and financial support.

“With limited capital, I faced countless challenges, but persistence and support changed everything. Modern facilities and new products opened doors I never imagined.”

Muhammad Jan



“With vision and hard work, farming can become a strong and sustainable business. The support I received has strengthened my confidence and allowed me to plan even bigger for the future.”

Mussadiq Aziz

Success Story-21

Building a Sustainable Future

Mussadiq Aziz and
Shams ul Rehman Goat Farm



Mussadiq Aziz from Village Rahi Nigore in District Panjgur is a progressive farmer who manages Shams ul Rehman Goat Farm. His farm has more than one hundred and fifty goats, five cows and six camels, and he protects them with trained guard dogs. He also cultivates sixty three acres of land where he grows lucerne, onions and wheat and maintains more than twelve hundred Muzawati date palms. This combination of agriculture and livestock has built a strong and diverse farming system for his family.

He previously faced labour shortages, transport issues, unpredictable weather and limited market access. Through the GRASP project, supported by SPO, he received a matching grant of PKR 2.5 million and completed training that strengthened his business management and sustainable farming skills. The grant enabled him to plan a modern livestock shed and improve overall farm management.

His farm now employs four families as permanent workers and provides seasonal jobs during harvest. His farming practices support the environment and long term productivity. He aims to expand his herd, adopt climate resilient crops and improve post harvest processes to reach wider markets.



“Empowerment is not only overcoming challenges. It is turning them into opportunities. With support and hard work, my livestock has become both my livelihood and a legacy for my family.”

Tako

Success Story-22

Empowering Women in Livestock Farming

Tako's Journey of Strength and Sustainability



Tako Bibi, a 76 year old livestock farmer from Shah Abad Askani in District Kech, has spent more than twenty five years raising goats and sheep. She currently manages nearly three hundred animals which provide a stable income for her family.

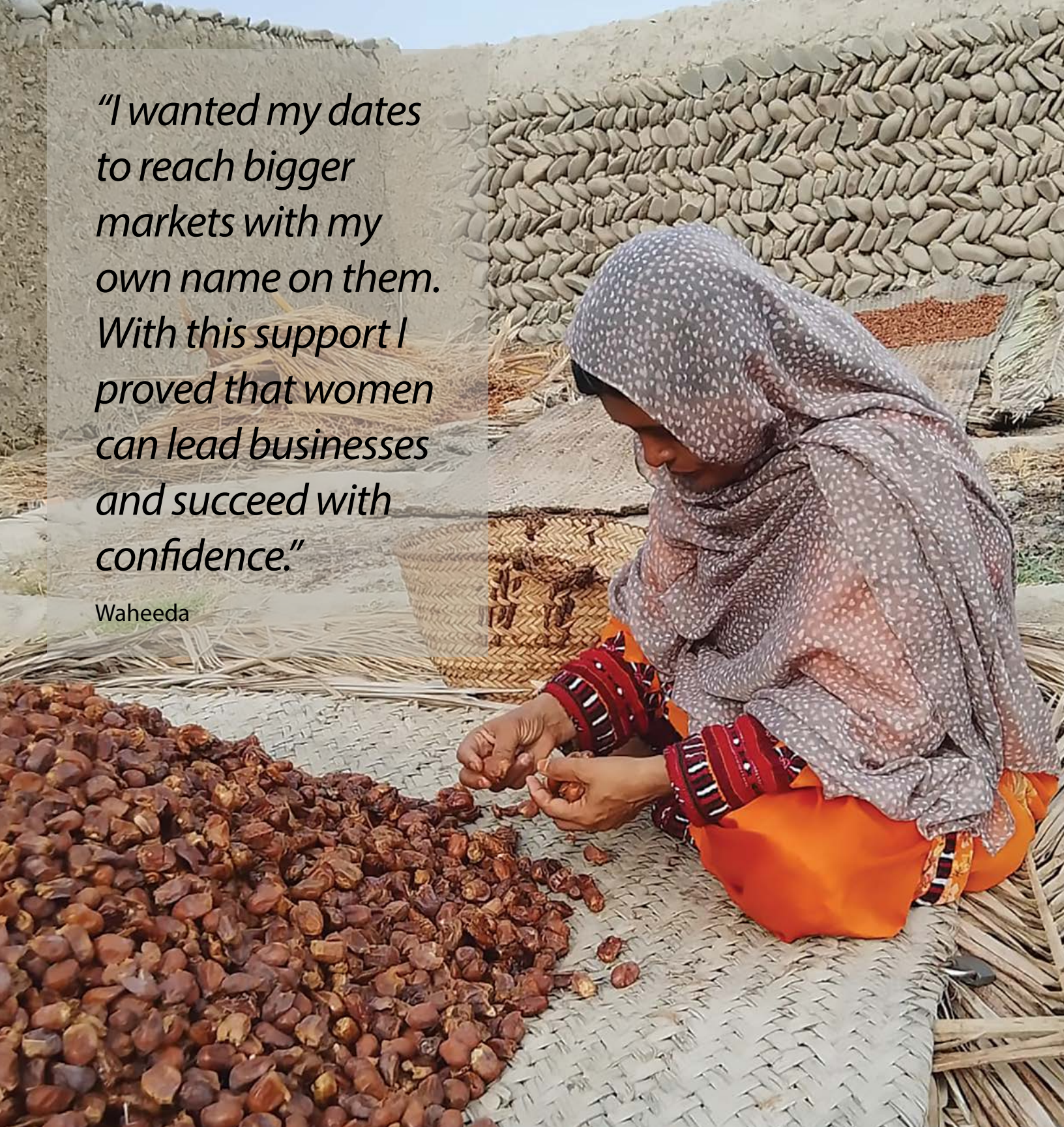
In her early years she faced repeated losses due to disease, harsh weather and no market linkages. As one of the few women in livestock farming, she had limited support and no exposure to modern practices.

In 2022, SPO connected her with the GRASP project. She received a matching grant of PKR 0.5 million and completed business plan training that improved her understanding of financial planning, marketing and livestock management. She used the grant to build a protective animal shed and to purchase a wool cutter and a lassi making machine, which diversified her income.

With regular technical guidance from SPO, she improved feeding and disease management. Her animals became healthier and started selling at higher prices. Her reduced losses and increased productivity strengthened her earnings and encouraged other women in her area to consider similar opportunities.

"I wanted my dates to reach bigger markets with my own name on them. With this support I proved that women can lead businesses and succeed with confidence."

Waheeda



Success Story-23

Breaking Barriers in Agriculture

Waheeda's Rise as a Female Entrepreneur



Waheeda from Shahrak has become the first woman in her district to launch her own brand of date products. With a matching grant of PKR 0.5 million under the Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress project, implemented by SPO, she transformed her small date farm into a flourishing enterprise called Waheeda Date Farm.

Before receiving support, Waheeda sold her dates using traditional methods with no branding or proper packaging. Limited resources and lack of exposure prevented her from reaching bigger markets. Determined to improve her family's income, she decided to take a bold step and create a brand of her own.

The grant enabled her to develop better infrastructure, improve processing and hygiene standards, and invest in strong packaging. She also applied water, sanitation, and hygiene practices to ensure the safety and quality of her dates. With these improvements her products became suitable for premium markets and health-conscious buyers.

Today, Waheeda offers high quality table dates and value-added products with a professional identity. Her success has encouraged many other women in her area to consider agribusiness and take steps toward financial independence. She now stands as a role model for female entrepreneurs in a male-dominated sector, showing that dedication and support can open doors to new possibilities.

PROJECT SUPERVISION

Mehrab Ali

Regional Head, Turbat

Tabassum Shaheen

National Project Manager, GRASP

Stories, Content, and Photography

Asfand Yar Khan

Manager MEAL & Communications, GRASP

Content Editing and Design Supervision

Maham Marosh Khan

Communications Manager

Design & Print

Collage Visual Communications-CVC



