

Aik Saath program update #5

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Program Update

Edition #5 | September 2019

Aik Saath Goal

That **rural poor**, particularly **women**, living in the Punjab and Sindh significantly and equitably benefit from improvements in strategic **value chains**.

Welcome to this Aik Saath newsletter. We start with exciting news about two young Pakistani team members being awarded prestigious scholarships by ACIAR.

Congratulations, Anam and Faizal!



Overall, ACIAR supports eleven projects in Pakistan, making the program a hive of activity.

This edition of Update has:

- "snapshots" of this activity with links to more detail
- stories from individual projects
- learnings from our Annual Meeting in July; and
- other items of cross-program importance

Together we can achieve more for the smallholder farmers of Pakistan.

We are interested in your [feedback](#)!



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The Australia Awards [John Allwright Fellowship](#) (JAF) program aims to enhance research capacity in ACIAR's partner country institutions. It is fiercely competitive, with young scientists from ACIAR projects in thirty countries seeking support for postgraduate training at Australian universities.

A number of Pakistani Agricultural Scientists are John Allwright Fellows and members of ACIAR's alumni network. Many have progressed to senior roles as well as maintaining international linkages to benefit Pakistan.

Our newest John Allwright Scholars are already making a big impact through their work on the Dairy_Beef and Water Management Skills projects, respectively.

Anam Afzal is a qualified vet and is an Area Advisor for Punjab in the Aik Saath Dairy-Beef Project. Anam is interested in non-conventional feed resources for beef production and its contribution in household's nutrition/food security.

Faizan ul Hassan is an engineer with Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR). He has 18 years experience working with major players of water supply and distribution and his studies will focus on better integrating water governance systems in Pakistan.

Best wishes for your studies in Australia!

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[Condolences to family, friends and colleagues of dear Sajid Ahmad](#)



Sadly sharing the news of the sudden passing of Ch Sajid Ahmad, Director Agriculture Extension Horticulture Punjab. Sajjad has served in elite positions in Agriculture Extension and was a very supportive partner in the Aik Saath SVVCP project.

Previously he has also been engaged in ASLP project activities. All members of the Aik Saath family who met him at Annual Meetings will have noted his kindly and helpful disposition and pray for comfort for his family and friends

[About Aik Saath](#)

Aik Saath is an Urdu phrase meaning "Together".

for Development (R4D) projects in Pakistan (see links below).

Aik Saath represents:

- the joint Pakistani & Australian government commitment to the program
- multiple agricultural products, themes and research disciplines
- numerous technical, commercial and official partners in Australia and Pakistan
- all members of smallholder families and communities, including women and youth

Facilitated by the ACIAR Country Office in Pakistan and the coordinator, Aik Saath fosters collaborations to help maximise the impact from ACIAR Research for Development projects in Pakistan.

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[Aik Saath Annual Meeting Karachi 8-10th July 2019](#)



The theme of the Annual Meeting was Working Innovatively – Augmenting partnerships. It explored some fresh approaches to strengthen knowledge about all eleven currently active projects.

This led into fresh approaches to [Collaboration](#); as well as other across-program topics - [Communication](#); [Diversity & Inclusion](#); and [M&E](#).

These links provide more detail on the relevant sections of the meeting.

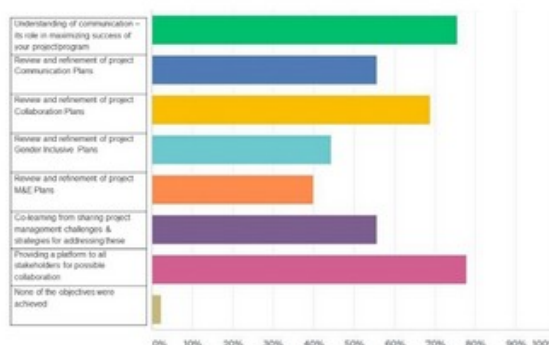
Over 100 people participated across the three days including from all the projects plus several external stakeholders seeking collaboration. Senior government officials also attended a briefing by ACIAR and project leaders.

This year, expert facilitators from School of Learning (SoL) provided fresh perspectives on each topic; helped ensure active participation by all; and punished latecomers! Their [report](#) is available.

events across the 30 countries where ACIAR is active and said he was “...struck by the level of engagement and enthusiasm by almost everyone in the room” at the Aik Saath Karachi event.

Ninety-five percent of respondents want a similar event in 2020. Our goal is to do even better next time! To help with this and to maximise benefits from the time and resources, we ran an [e-survey](#). This also included questions about the Aik Saath program approach and how it can be improved.

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[Strengthening Knowledge](#)

Many participants highlighted in their feedback the value of learning about other ACIAR projects and interacting with fellow researchers. For example for “What are your main ah ha (plus) moments from the Annual Meeting?”, responses included:

Interacting with other project teams and dancing together.

Interaction with lot of people

Knowing your team members and other projects members

Networking with others

Participation of all stakeholders was the ah ha moments

The exchange of ideas during the discussion sessions.

There are so many really talented people working within the projects in Pakistan

To help ensure that this networking will deliver benefits, we used several ways to strengthen knowledge of each other’s projects: [1. Factsheets](#); [2. Photos](#); and [3. Stories](#). Plus, for the senior officials, five-minute presentations focused particularly on benefits to Sindh agriculture.

Importantly, these approaches to Increasing Knowledge about eachothers projects provides a robust foundation for:

1. Improving Communication with other stakeholders; and
2. Exploring Collaborations, both within and outside the ACIAR program

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[1. Factsheets](#)

ACIAR currently supports eleven projects in Pakistan across a diverse range of issues



& Beef



Small Ruminants



Horticulture



Pulses



Water



Grains

D
air
y

All projects provided an updated factsheet for circulation ahead of the meeting (to all participants including officials) as pre-reading, so that only short presentations are necessary, to reduce audience burnout.

Click [here](#) for the detailed project list. Click here for brief [snapshots](#) of every project.

Or follow the links below to the Fact Sheet for each project.

[Dairy_Beef](#)

[Small Ruminants \(Sheep & Goats\)](#)

[Pulse Production](#)

[Pulse Value Chains](#)

[Mung Bean Harvester](#)

[Wheat Stripe Rust](#)

[Horticulture \(Vegetable Value Chains\)](#)

[Horticulture Policy](#)

[Water Policy \(Participatory Irrigation Management\)](#)

[Groundwater](#)

[Water Management Skills](#)

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2. A Picture tells 1000 Words

This session encouraged teams to imagine how to summarise the essence of their work in up to three photos, without using any words. These were displayed for two minutes, then one table group shared their reflections, impressions and messages received and the project team had a minute to respond.

The presentations have been combined [here](#). Some teams were very successful in sharing a memorable image of their work. Others found it more difficult to refrain from putting words on the screen or were frustrated that the instructions weren't clearer.

Overall feedback was positive, with average 76% approval rating.

"A good way to communicate project scope and activities"

"It was interesting in the sense that it built the capacity of the audience to capture ongoing activities through a photo"

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[3. Stories](#)



vital for exchange with fellow scientists and to ensure research findings are valid.

Sometimes, even for other scientists, a **story** is the most engaging way to explain a project and its impact. In the lead up to this year's meeting, an "Impact Story Competition" was held. [Guidelines and five themes](#) were provided six weeks before the mid-June deadline and [sixteen stories were shared by six projects](#) and an external partner. All stories were displayed as posters at the Annual Meeting. Using [evaluation criteria](#) based on the guidelines, eight stories were highly commended and five of these were awarded prizes

(**Bold** in list below)

[Horticulture Value Chain 1](#) - Promoting small rural enterprises among rural youth and women through vegetable value added products in Sindh

[Horticulture Value Chain 2](#) - Exploring the potential of small farmers and enhancing farm income

[Dairy_Beef 1](#) - **Breaking the glass ceiling: strengthening women in dairy farming to improve livelihoods**

[Dairy_Beef 2](#) - A sustainable solution for helping smallholder farmers to overcome fodder shortage

[Dairy_Beef 3](#) - **Spreading the spell of "practice change" through farm advisers**

[Dairy_Beef 4](#) - Ultimate benefits to smallholder farmers through improved market linkage

[Small Ruminants](#) - Assessing the value of providing high-quality feed and water to young animals

[Water Management Skills 1](#) - **Technology empowering women and youth in agriculture**

[Water Management Skills 2](#) - VIA competition: a celebration of farmers role and a method to improve their performance in technology learning

[Water Management Skills 3](#) - Better utilisation of local resources for vegetable production at household level

[Water Management Skills 4](#) - Developing a learning chain among female farmers: vegetable production at household level

[Groundwater 1](#) - **Safe water for my family**

[Groundwater 2](#) - Learning in the field together

[Groundwater 3](#) - Effective dissemination through collaboration with stakeholders

[Engro/DFAT BPP/MEDA 1](#) - **From a shy bystander smallholder with traditional subsistence farming to becoming a seed supplier and entrepreneur**

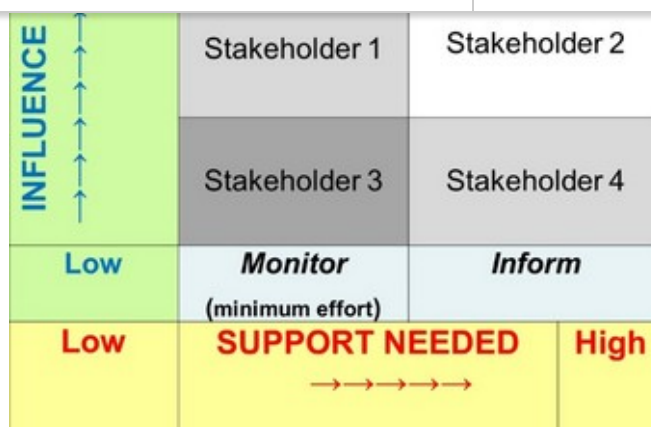
[Engro/DFAT BPP/MEDA 2](#) - PAVE – paving ways to prosperity for the small holders

[Pulse Production \(Late\)](#) - Increasing Productivity & Profitability of Pulses In Pakistan

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Communication can represent an enormous “hidden cost” – through wasted effort on poorly targeted efforts as well as the “opportunity cost” of failing to select the “right” approach to deliver the “right” message at the “right” time.... for each stakeholder.

Whether the message is shared via a scientific publication or a story, careful planning is essential to harnessing scarce resources efficiently and effectively. Resources are available [here](#).



Teams were invited to share their communication plans stocktake: What was planned?; What was progressed or achieved?; What were the challenges?; Ideas to move forward? This included reviewing the planning [template](#) which has been used in previous meetings. Many teams use this as a communications management tool.

Stakeholder Analysis			Action Planning			
Priority stakeholder with whom the project team needs to engage and / or communicate	Why are they important?	Type of importance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult Monitor Inform Manage closely 	How will the project team Communicate and Evaluate?	What actions and budget are needed?	Who will do it?	When or how often will actions be needed?
A.						
B.						

Another angle to communication was presented by meeting facilitators School of Leadership (SoL). This included a personality-type self-evaluation and coaching on how this affects communication preferences. All the teams discussed in their groups to learn more about human differences and manage the difference accordingly. [Return to Contents](#)

Collaboration

As well as these activities strengthening knowledge between the teams, there were also several important external stakeholders participating. They appreciated these insights into project activities and also presented their views of potential partnerships to help expand the scale and extent of project impacts.



planning of both these and project-to-project collaborations. Each team updated their collaboration planning template and also discussed the challenges and benefits of collaborating beyond their project activity.

Diversity and Inclusion

Most teams ([and the Aik Saath program as a whole](#)) have gender inclusion plans. These help ensure that all perspectives are considered throughout the projects and their teams. As part of ongoing capacity building on this theme, several Aik Saath team members who attended the [Seeds of Change Conference](#) in Canberra in April 2019 shared some learnings on Diversity & Inclusion.



Humaira Iqbal & Sajida Shahzad introduced the concept of the Iceberg model of the “hidden” (non-monetary) economy of communities.

The Aik Saath coordinator shared the results from a [roundtable](#) facilitated on bridging the gap between bio-physical and social science research.

Shireen Naqvi from School of Leadership provided insights on Diversity and Inclusion. [Read More](#)

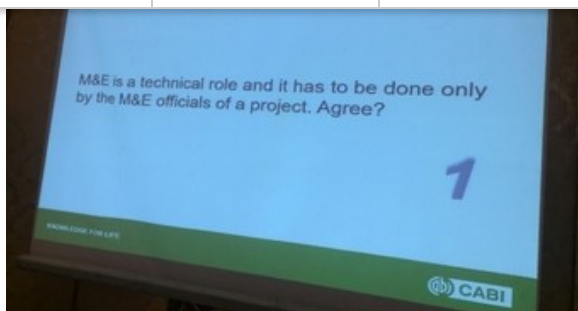
“Organizations built on diversity and inclusion encourage a new world of ideas, strategic, and different points of view, which fuels overall innovation.

Diversity and inclusion are not buzzwords to be tossed around; they are bottom-line success imperative.”

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Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

In the spirit of cross-learning between teams, Irshad Ali, CABI’s M&E specialist, provided a fresh understanding of M&E through participative activities and presentation.



Some key points were:

- M&E is not a once-off, “set and forget” or “template” exercise. Although design starts along with the initial project design, it continues through the inception, establishment and operational phases as below
- While the “standard tools” of Activity Tracking and Impact Pathway Analysis are used, other Qualitative and Social Science-oriented Tools are equally valued: Appreciative Inquiry; Livelihood Tracking; and Care Economy Analysis
- Care Economy Analysis – is closely related to the “hidden economy” concept of the Iceberg Model (above)

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[Climate Change insights at Crawford Conference](#)

Nexus (noun):

(Collins Dictionary)

A nexus is a connection or series of connections within a particular situation or system.

Each year, the Crawford Fund’s conference highlights the need to move beyond silos in our research and policy work to address cross-cutting, “nexus” issues. This year’s event highlighted the agriculture, energy and water nexus. Each is dependent on the others and all are exacerbated by climate change impacts, raising serious concerns about future security.

The [Crawford Fund](#) is closely aligned with ACIAR and has a strong focus on mentoring young Ag R4D scientists, in Australia and overseas.

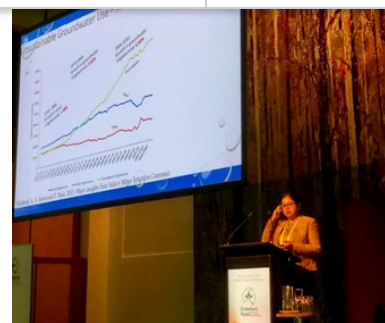


A scholars program at the conference provided insights and connections for 51 mostly undergraduate students considering career options. This program is expertly run by early-career ag R4D scientists through the Researchers in Agriculture for International Development ([RAID](#)) network.

RAID members also provide “Keynote Listeners”. Their [summary](#) of the event **contains links to all the presentations.**

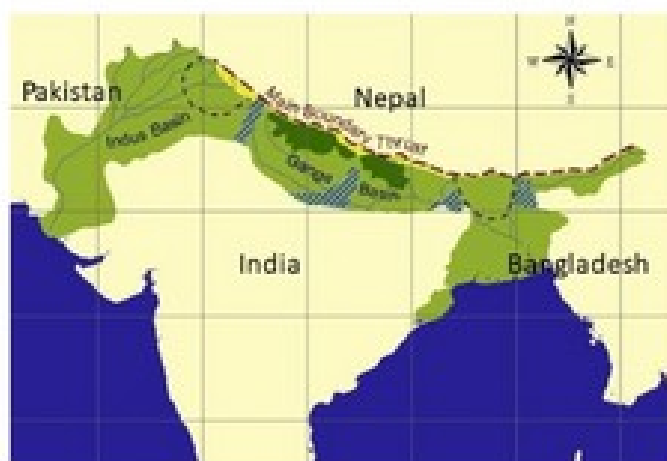
are relevant to the Aik Saath Water Program (and therefore to all projects), including Dr Aditi Mukherji from the International Water Management Institute ([IWMI](#)).

Question: How could the Ag R4D community in Pakistan innovatively harvest the ideas and inspirations from an event such as this? Your [ideas](#), please!



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The Nexus Challenges for South Asia



Population – now 1.870b; 2050 2.24b

Poverty – 15%

Under \$3.10 – 50-60%

Urbanisation – now 35%; 2050 50%

Stunted Children – 37.5%

Over 90% of water used for agriculture

Climate change – 35-40% decline in crop yield; 10% more irrigation water used

Energy

- Massive growth in demand
- Critical to prosperity of the region and tackling poverty
- Energy choices will have long term Impacts
- Significant agriculture/energy/water linkages
- Climate change impacts on and of energy

[New Guidebook for people-centred Ag R4D](#)

In the 21st Century, both donor and recipient countries recognise that deep **social insights** are essential to achieving impacts from **biophysical** R4D.

However, it can be a challenge to "**bridge the gap**" between the social and biophysical science perspectives. This was briefly explored at the [roundtable](#) at the April Seeds of Change conference mentioned above.

In contrast, the authors of this new book have distilled their lifetime lessons from the field into a step-by-step approach, based on their Collaborative Research in International Development (CRID) research model. Adjunct Professors Barbara Chambers and John Spriggs (along with Dr Sandra Heaney-Mustafa, Dr Azeem and others from NARC and University of Canberra) led the [Social Science](#) component of ASLP (Agriculture Sector Linkages Program) in Pakistan from 2010

The new book will be launched in November and will no doubt prove invaluable as we continue on the learning curve of collaborative R4D. Contact [Barbara](#) for any further details.

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Notes for your Diary.

15 October [PODA Annual Rural Women Conference](#) - UN International Day of Rural Women

11-13 Nov [Trop Ag Conference](#) – call for abstracts was listed in March Update.

Several Aik Saath project team members are presenting Brisbane

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Feedback or ideas for future editions? Please get in touch

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