



# PAKISTAN

## RAPID ASSESMENT

Resilience Building of Poor  
and Vulnerable Households

## IFAD'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

RURAL POOR STIMULUS FACILITY (RPSF)

### FACILITY'S PILLARS



Inputs  
& basic assets



Targeted  
funds



Access  
to markets



Digital  
services

## **Resilience Building of Poor and Vulnerable Households (Pakistan)<sup>1</sup>**

Launched in April 2020, the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) is IFAD's multi-donor response to COVID-19. With the overall objective of providing agile support to poor rural producers affected by key immediate challenges posed due to COVID-19, it seeks to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods in the context of the crisis by ensuring timely access to inputs, information, markets and liquidity. The Resilience Building of Poor and Vulnerable Households project in the context of COVID-19 in Pakistan is part of the 20% of the projects chosen to undergo a rapid assessment to report against Tier 1 'development result' indicators in the RPSF Results Measurement Framework.

### **Project activities**

The RPSF initiative leveraged activities from the existing South Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project (SPPAP) project, with a total budget of US\$ 2.37 million for the establishment of food banks and cash grants.

The RPSF grant funded activity was designed to build resilience, minimise the impacts of COVID-19 on livelihoods and improve food security for rural small households in Pakistan. The development objective of this grant is to sustain income generation opportunities and enhance food security and nutrition of rural households. The project established and strengthened capacity for 100 community food banks, provided communities with inputs (wheat, poultry, hatching units, kitchen gardening kits, nurseries), supported associated training, and also provided cash grants to those receiving enterprise or vocational training of the IFAD financed SPPAP.

The targeted the geographical area of IFAD's funded Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project (SPPAP) covering the districts of Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Rahimyar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Layyah, Bhakkar, Khushab, and Mianwali, with the majority of activities targeting Mianwali, Bhakkar and Khushab which are characterised by relatively higher incidences of poverty, rainfed agriculture and limited employment opportunities.

The project supported directly supported about 28,000 people, of which 95 per cent were women and 56 per cent were youth – and reached 156,000 household members. Overall, 94 per cent beneficiaries are categorized as extremely and chronically poor.

### **Rapid assessment methodology**

Self-reported information on Tier 1 'development results' indicators was collected from a sample of 500 beneficiary households, of which 14.2 percent are headed by women and 13.2 percent are headed by youth (aged less than 35 years). The sample is representative of non-flooded areas since several districts were replaced in light of floods occurring on 30 August 2022. Details of each indicator were asked with the aim of capturing the potential

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<sup>1</sup> This note is prepared by Vibhuti Mendiratta, Gonzalo Nunez-Chaim and Piero Massotti from the Research and Impact Assessment (RIA) division of IFAD.

contribution effect from i) COVID-19 and ii) the RPSF project. Interviews were conducted between the last week of August 2022 and mid-September 2022 using a Pen-and-Paper Interview (PAPI) survey.

## **Key results <sup>2</sup>**

### **Contribution effect of COVID-19**

- The pandemic had a negative impact on most beneficiary households, and across all indicators of interest, with the exception of assets owned.
- Youth headed households reported more often a decline in the number of assets owned, relative to households headed by adults, while those headed by a women experienced less often a reduction in this indicator.

### **Contribution effect of RPSF**

- Most indicators show substantial improvements after the RPSF project was implemented. Production, sales, income, number of meals consumed, and resilience stayed the same or increased for the majority of households. Further, almost 8 out of 10 households maintained or increased the number of assets owned.
- In most dimensions, households headed by women and men, and youth and adults benefitted equally from the RPSF project. Only households headed by youth were less likely to maintain or increase their ownership of assets, compared to those headed by an adult.

### **Lessons learned**

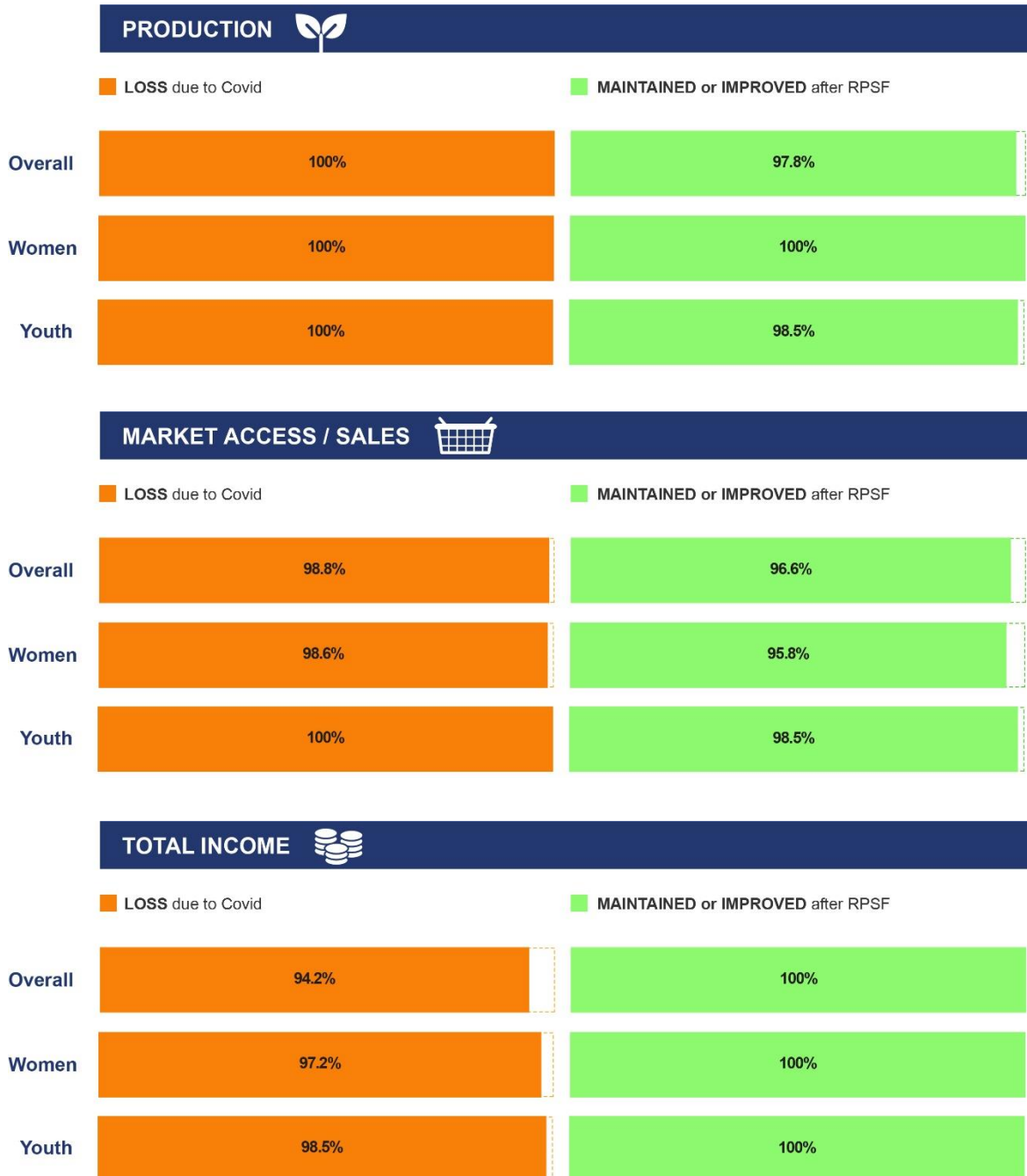
- Most households did not have to sell assets to cope with the negative shock from COVID, either because they had other means of doing so or that they did not need to, or because market conditions were also poor for selling assets owned.
- While asset accumulation takes more time, future program design should consider how to support improvement in some of these longer-term outcomes, and in particular for youth.

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<sup>2</sup> The rapid assessment does not consider a control group; thus, results are only indicative of potential contribution effects.

**Figure 1:** Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

**Figure 2:** Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



**Figure 1:** Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

**Figure 2:** Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



**NOTE:** RPSF activities were rolled out starting in October 2021.

Two separate questions were asked for each indicator. The first question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator between March 2020 and October 2021: i) a total loss; ii) reduced; iii) stayed the same; or iv) increased. The **orange bar** shows the percentage of households that responded i) or ii) to this question, that is, those which experienced a total loss or reduction in the indicator. The second question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator since October 2021: i) reduced further; ii) stayed the same; iii) increased but still below the level before COVID-19; iv) returned to level before COVID-19; or v) increased above the level before COVID-19. The **green bar** shows the percentage of households that responded ii), iii) iv) or v) to this question, that is, those which maintained or improved each indicator since the start of RPSF.

*Acknowledgements: IFAD's Programme Management Department (PMD), NRSP and Pakistan country team.*



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