



Sub-grantee



# Citizen Voice Project

## Project Completion Report

Grantee Name: Farmers Development Organization

Thematic Area: Rajanpur

Grant Agreement No. \_\_\_\_\_

March 20, 2013 to July 20, 2013

### Disclaimer:

Citizens' Voice Project is being implemented with support from the American People through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the responsibility of (Farmers Development Organization), and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. Government.

## List of Acronyms

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| CVP   | Citizen Voice Project                     |
| FDO   | Farmers Development Organization          |
| TAF   | the Asia Foundation                       |
| USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development |
| DEC   | District Election Commission              |
| ECP   | Election Commission of Pakistan           |
| DCO   | District Coordinator Officer              |
| DMO   | District Monitoring Officer               |
| IEC   | Information Education and Communication   |
| TMA   | Town Municipal Authority                  |
| EDR   | Election Dispute Resolution               |

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## A. PROJECT SUMMARY:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name of the Sub-Grantee Organization:       | Farmers Development Organization   |
| Grant Agreement number                      |  |
| Project duration                            | From 20/03/2013 to 20/07/2013  |
| Title of the project                        | Citizen Voice Project  |
| Thematic Area                               | Free Fair and Peaceful Election  |
| Total Project Cost                          |  |
| Project Location                            | Country: Pakistan<br>Province: Punjab<br>District (s): Rajanpur  |
| Project Objectives (overall and per sector) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To strengthen citizens' voice through, among others, public awareness and voters' education initiatives, oversight of relevant public bodies and/or advocacy for reforming relevant laws, policies, practices or public attitudes for free, fair and peaceful elections.</li> <li>• To strengthen public accountability in election related matters through, among others, raising questions, seeking explanations, developing requisite capacities and filing complaints at appropriate forums.</li> </ul> |

## B. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS:

Citizen Voice Project was implemented in three constituencies of District Rajanpur and project total duration was Four month. In this whole project duration all the activities were running smoothly and expected all result were achieved. The major Efforts were made to increase voters' turn out, especially in polling stations where the turnout has traditionally been low. For this purpose many activities were done so that capacity/strength and voters turn out increased of 5000 H/H in district Rajanpur through awareness raising sessions, IEC materials, held stalls and meetings, but Implementation team approached 5041 households through 'door to door visits. So that public attitude reformed through advocacy for free, fair & peaceful elections. 10 Corner meetings were conducted in District Rajanpur. In this Corner meeting it was shared that vote casting was our legal and moral duty and our votes are much valuable for future decisions. So we can change in the destiny of our country with our valuable able vote so that turn out increased. Team conducted 20 stalls in 50 days, for awareness and motivation of potential voters at appropriate places e.g. TMAs, schools, Markets, bus stands, Union Council offices and cultural events, in which 10182 peoples participated. Advocacy against Discrimination or Barriers to Voting was done so that through awareness peoples attitude changed and barriers might be finished which are given as following

- (a) Restrictions on females' voting
- (b) Establishment of polling stations at inconvenient locations (e.g. away from voting population)
- (c) Unfair restrictions on persons with disability
- (d) Risks or threats of violence in or around the polling stations
- (e) Lack of timely access to voters' lists or information about polling stations.

For this purpose relevant information collected in a timely manner and 13 meetings were arranged with relevant local authorities (DCO, DMO and NADRA etc) to discuss the issues and demand corrective measures in elections.300 letters/ applications

were wrote to local and higher authorities in order to document the problems and demand corrective measures and also team facilitate the communities so that they directly engaged with the relevant authorities and submit their demands. 4 seminars were organized at Tehsil level in which 25 to 30 stakeholder (Lawyers, teachers and Media) participated. It was an open forum where everyone got opportunity/chance to communicate. 50 young leaders/voters were identified, enrolled and trained so that they sensitized the local community for their peaceful participation in elections. 3 candidates forum were organized with different parties to highlight the turn out ratio and importance of vote casting.

1. Introduction and background of project

The Citizen Voice Project was started on 20 March 2012 to 20 July 2013 in three constitutions (Rajanpur, Jampur and Rujhan) in Tehsil Rajanpur of District Rajanpur with the support of USAID. The main objective of this project implementation were,

- To strengthen citizens' voice through public awareness, voters' education initiatives, oversight of relevant public bodies or advocacy for reforming relevant laws, policies, practices or public attitudes for free, fair and peaceful elections.
- To strengthen public accountability in election related matters through, among others, raising questions, seeking explanations, developing requisite capacities and filing complaints at appropriate forums.

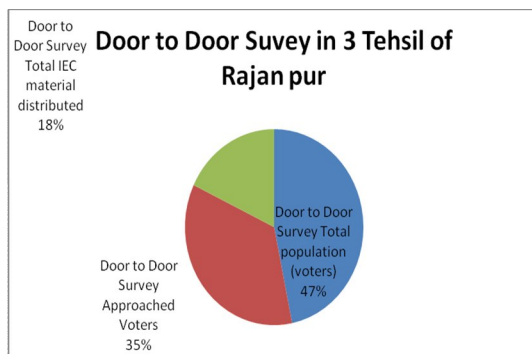
The purpose was also to provide a mechanism to Pakistani constitution community for free and fair elections and requires that all eligible voters should be able to vote, without any fear or discrimination, for the candidates or parties of their choice. However, as this was our previous experience of elections in Pakistan which showed that voters' turnout was often low due to a variety of reasons including, among others, discrimination against certain segments of society like women and disabled, fear of election-related violence, allegations of rigging and violations of electoral code of conduct that cause distrust in the whole electoral process, inability of political parties to educate and mobilize voters, and weaknesses in the election administration in terms of voters'

registration and other arrangements in a manner convenient to voters. But from last few years, major steps have been taken to improve the quality of voters' lists, strengthening the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), and provided a mechanism for an agreed caretaker government in order to minimize the possibility of any official interference in favor of one or the other party.

## 2. Major Activities carried out during the project

Note: Please describe details of all major activities carried out during the project like its purpose, process or methodology adopted, beneficiaries' participation, topics covered including supporting tables, graphs and pictures etc):

"Citizen Voice" project was started in district Rajanpur to provide a mechanism for free, fair elections, and requires that all eligible voters should be able to vote, without any fear or discrimination, for the candidates or parties of their choice. For this purpose a number of activities done so that people's behavior changed through rising awareness to increase the voting turn out. Firstly team conducted a survey to approaches 5041 households through 'door to door visits' in three constituencies after carefully identifying segments of populations so that they know about the weak track record of voting. In this activity team registered voters all the household members and distributed 11699 IEC materials to increase their awareness. 10 corners meetings were conducted in all Tehsil of District Rajanpur, here Total 630 community peoples participated and 934 IEC materials distributed among these participants for awareness rising and created importance for vote among communities because vote casting is their legal and moral duty so vote was much



valuable for future decision. Polling station had a very low turnout because this was due to the non interest of the relevant community, but VOTE was integrity of nation.

Women don't like to cast their vote but power of vote is equal for both male and female.

Social media was used in all activities especially in urban areas, with focus on potential voters. Through this campaign community was aware about the importance of the vote and paid their vital role in coming election 2013. FDO updated the social media on daily basis about the activity in regards of free fair and peaceful election. 2018 people like these update till and pass comments on it. List of links is attached with this report.

Achievements and why this event is Important for the project:

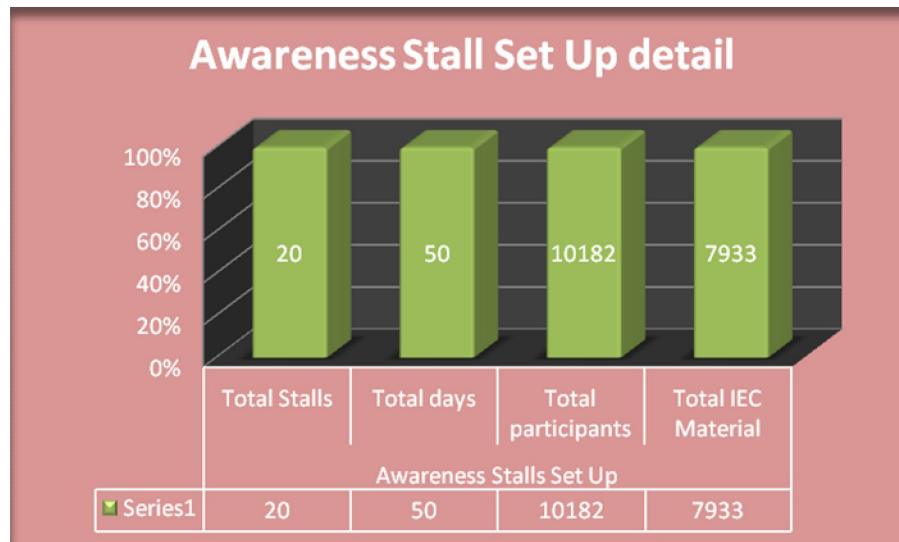
- Developed a link with voters through social media,
- Educated the people about the vote importance
- Approached the out of reach people through media campaign.

20 stalls were established in 50 days at different public places and near of polling stations of District Rajanpur in which 10182 peoples participated. 7933 IEC materials were distributed among these participants and the objectives of this activity was discussed; young leaders mobilized them about the importance of vote. In each stall two young leaders engaged in these stalls to deal the community, stalls were decorated with Free, Fair and Peace Full coming election 2013.

Achievements and why this event is Important for the project:

- Through this activity convey the message in the community.
- Peoples aware about the importance of vote casting.
- 10182 peoples aware through this activity.





Implemented team started advocacy initiatives to address concerns about discrimination or other barriers to free, fair and secret balloting. These barriers may, among others, include

- (a) Restrictions on females' voting,
- (b) Establishment of polling stations at inconvenient locations (e.g. away from voting population);
- (c) Unfair restrictions on persons with disability;
- (d) Risks or threats of violence in or around the polling stations
- (e) Lack of timely access to voters' lists or information about polling stations. These concerns addressed by implementing the following activities:

Relevant information also collected from all line departments in a timely manner. 13 meetings with relevant local authorities ( District Coordination Officer, Returning officer, District Monitoring Officer, District Election Commission, PMLN Dist. Office, NADRA and UC sectaries were conducted to discuss the issues and demand corrective measures. FDO team after introduction shared objective and purpose implementing the Citizen Voice Project. They shared that as you know general Election of 2013 is being coming. FDO was working with the collaboration of USAID on improvement of vote turn out in those areas where the vote turned out is very low. Team shared that they were going to targeting 30 polling station where last time voter turnout was very low. These polling stations are scattered in the both NA 174 and 175. FDO team also shared the project activities plan. All these relevant

local authorities appreciated the project activities and its objectives. They said that all these departments were busy for the free and peaceful elections but they were ready if FDO team needs to avail any facilitation of their departments. IEC material was also shared with these entire relevant departments. They also shared material which was printed by the Election commission of Pakistan and also guide about the polling station scheme and future planning about the coming election,

Achievements and why these events were Important for the project:

- Developed a link with Line Department,
- Sharing of problems in coming election,
- With the both effort, free, fair and peaceful election will be possible,
- Got guide line about the polling station scheme and share the data about the election.

About 402 letters/applications written to different local and higher parties' leaders, local leaders and line departments in order to document the problems and demand corrective measures. 300 letters to the parties' leader and local candidates for awareness and motivation of potential voters. The main objective was

- Increased of education budget to, at the least, 4 percent of GDP.
- Implemented of policies, which subsidize and support small farmers, and ensure low input prices and reasonable out prices for agricultural sector.
- Enactment of right to free and compulsory education acts in the respective provinces, as per the letter and spirit of Article 25-A of the Constitution.
- Reduction of indirect taxation, which affects the poor more, to less than 55 percent of total tax revenues.
- Strengthening of tax collection system, especially in terms of collecting direct taxes in a fair, non-discriminatory and professional manner.
- Enactment of strong right to information legislation at the Federal and provincial levels, which is consistent with the letter and spirit of Article 19-A of the Constitution and international/ regional best practices.
- Enactment of strong anti-corruption legislation and its effective implementation at the Federal and provincial levels.

102 letters written to the line departments with different complaints like:-

- Combined polling feudal system
- Risks or threats of violence
- Polling station out of reach
- Wrong voter registration

Achievements and why this event was Important for the project:

- Through this activity convey the complaints to the line department, their needs in future about the health, education and basic necessities.

5 public events like seminars or press conferences. Team organized one Press conference in District Rajanpur in which 12 participants participated and IEC material was also distributed among them. The main purpose of this press conference was to reform in existing EDR mechanisms and demand from the all political candidate for the betterment and strong Pakistan.

After the meeting with different candidates about the EDR findings were below.

- The feudal violence on the poor people who does not gave them the right of vote independently that's why majority of the people gave vote from the fear
- People are not educated not and not aware about their vote value
- The feudal use a lot of money and use big pajeros during the Election Day's .Through this way they pressurized the poor people to show them their power and made them psychology slaves.
- The feudal agents used the illegal stamps and casted the bogus vote.

Achievements and why this event is Important for the project:

Through this event community conveyed their message to the relevant higher authorities in federal government like PM., chief election commission and other relevant persons.

4 seminars were organized in different venues of district Rajanpur for the betterment in EDR mechanisms and to debate and demand specific reforms. In these seminars 120 peoples participated. Line department shared about the causes of low turnout and its barriers like security threat, restrictions on females' voting, combined

polling stations, and feudal system in the area. There were some local generalists from different news papers they took part in the discussion. Looser candidates participated in the seminar and gave their suggestion to reform the election system. Suggestion given under below;

#### Problems

- Security setup
- Private Transportation.
- Long procedure.
- Security Threats.
- Rural voters have to right to cast their votes freely.

How to resolve the election dispute? All the political members gave the different arguments which are given below

- You are the best mankind because you forbidden the evil and order to good deeds.
- In this country feudal system is very strong and due to illiteracy voters don't know about their rights.
- Harassment from candidates
- Thana culture
- Education system is not better.
- We want 100% education and Islamic & Jihad should be in slaybus.
- New govt. Budget announced and poor became very poor.
- System should be change.
- To educate the voter to cast his vote.
- Everybody have to right to contest the election.
- Poor people have to right for vote.

Achievements and why this event is Important for the project:

- Through this activity convey the message in the community to reform the system and give their suggestion.
- People aware about the EDR mechanism

FDO team identified 50 young leaders from community, enrolled and then conducted a one day workshop for these participants and the basic purpose to train these young leaders was to work with young voters and sensitized or motivated them for their peaceful participation in the voting process. These young leaders facilitated to develop a plan of voluntary activities, which supported the cause of

free, fair and peaceful elections. These young leaders issued certificates of acknowledgement to appreciate their contribution. Training contents were given below

- What is Democracy?
- Characteristic & Advantages of Good Governance
- Election Process And Voter Education
- Role of civil society's role in free, fair and peaceful election

One candidate forum was organized in district Rajanpur in which all the contestants in a constituency invited, and asked to sign commitment forms and made their commitments public. 213 members participated in this forum. Mr. Atif Hussain Mazari from the political party (PMLN), Musrat Hussain Mazari (I), Ghulam Nazik Solangi (MNA) participated in this forum. In this Forum following things were demanded from the all political candidate for the betterment and strong Pakistan.

- Increase of education budget to, at the least, 4 percent of GDP.
- Implementation of policies, which subsidize and support small farmers, and ensure low input prices and reasonable out prices for agricultural sector.
- Enactment of right to free and compulsory education acts in the respective provinces, as per the letter and spirit of Article 25-A of the Constitution.
- Reduction of indirect taxation, which affects the poor more, to less than 55 percent of total tax revenues.
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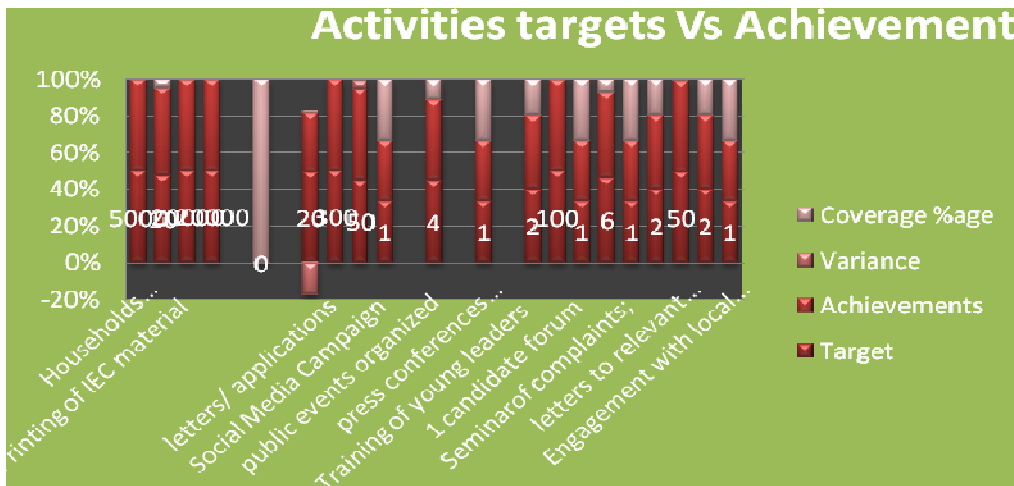
After this all the political parties gave their arguments one by one in this forum

Achievements and why this event is Important for the project:

Through this event different political candidates gathered in public forum and got commitment about the free, fair and peaceful election and commitment above

mentioned seven points' agenda for the betterment of Pakistan. Through this event public shared their problems

All the activities implemented before the election successfully and after the election in order to create awareness about the Election Dispute Resolution (EDR) mechanisms, as well as to advocate for appropriate reforms. Personal meetings conducted with 6 candidates of relevant national or provincial assembly seats, and listened to their complaints about the election. These meetings used to not only document the nature of complaints, but also to pick up ideas for reforms in the election process.



### 3. Results achieved through project

| Sr.# | Milestone   | Target         | Achievements   | Variance | Remarks/%age    |
|------|---|----------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|
| 1    | Households approached through 'door to door visits  | 5000           | 5041           | 0        | 100%            |
| 2    | Corner meetings conducted   | 10             | 10             | 0        | 100%            |
| 3    | Printing of IEC material (5000 posters, 15000 brochures)  | 20000          | 20000          | 0        | 100%            |
| 4    | Dissemination of IEC material   | 20000          | 20000          | 0        | 100%            |
| 5    | Setting up of 20 stalls for at least 50 days, for awareness and motivation of potential voters at appropriate places. | 20<br>(50Days) | 20<br>(50Days) | 0        | 100%            |
| 6    | Meetings conducted with relevant local authorities to discuss the issues.   | 20             | 13             | -07      | 65% Due to busy |

|    |  |                 |     |    | schedule in<br>Election 2013 of<br>relevant department |
|----|--|-----------------|-----|----|--|
| 7  | 300 letters/ applications to local and higher authorities in order to document the problems and demand corrective measures   | 300             | 300 | 0  | 100%   |
| 8  | Identification of 50 young leaders for voluntary activities  | 50              | 55  | +5 | 110%   |
| 9  | Social Media Campaign  | 1               | 1   | 0  | 100%   |
| 10 | public events i.e. 4 seminars organized  | 4               | 4   | 0  | 100%   |
| 11 | 1 public events i.e. 1 press conferences organized   | 1               | 1   | 0  | 100%   |
| 12 | 50 young leaders are trained in two workshops for voluntary activities   | 2               | 2   | 0  | 100%   |
| 13 | At least 100 letters sent to candidates or the respective Party leaders in the district as well at the provincial and national levels  | 100             | 100 | 0  | 100%   |
| 14 | 1 candidate forum for all the contestants in a constituency to sign commitment forms and make their commitments public   | 1               | 1   | 0  | 100%   |
| 15 | Personal meetings with 6 candidates of relevant national or provincial assembly seats, and listen to their complaints about the election   | 6               | 6   | 0  | 100%   |
| 16 | Organizing seminar in the related town/ tehsil to discuss the nature, types and scope of complaints; and inform participants about the EDR mechanisms which could be used to seek resolution | 1               | 1   | 0  | 100%   |
| 17 | 4 meetings with concerned legislators and officials in the town or district;   | 2               | 2   | 0  | 100%   |
| 18 | Writing 50 letters to relevant authorities (e.g legislators, PM, Chief Election Commissioner, etc.) at the Federal level.  | 50              | 50  | 0  | 100%   |
| 19 | Engagement with local media to explain the need of reforms in the existing EDR mechanisms through 2 press releases   | 2               | 2   | 0  | 100%   |
| 20 | Engagement with local media to explain the need of reforms in the existing EDR mechanisms through 1 press conference.  | 1               | 1   | 0  | 100%   |
| 21 | Final report   | 100 % completed |     |    |  |

4. Issues and problems faced

- Feudal system
- Illiterate community

- Non availability of winning candidates during the seminars and meeting.
  - People were not willing to share their personal information like CNIC # , Contact # and how many female lived in their home.
5. Step taken to overcome on issues and problems
- Meeting with local stake holders regarding the issue
  - Strong Mobilization
6. Lesson learnt
- It was a big challenge for team to manage all the project activities within the short duration but team done all these activities successfully within the time.

### C. Annexures

- i. Target vs achievement table
- ii. Major events' reports
- iii. Case studies
- iv. Picture Gallery
- v. News clips/cuttings
- vi. Link of social media campaign/blogs