



Process case study

Gender-sensitive community fodder banks build resilience in Afghanistan

Community Fodder Banks in Afghanistan help to mitigate disaster risk by providing feed during periods of scarcity as well as for fattening livestock during 'normal' times. Fodder and feed, strategically purchased at times and from places when/where it is cheaper, and then stored properly, form a critical emergency resource. This case study illustrates how cultural restrictions can be overcome to ensure women's involvement and generate wider benefits.

Background

The Kuchi are nomadic pastoralists in Afghanistan. They make up 8-10% of the total population (at approximately three million people), living primarily in the mountainous areas but migrating seasonally with their herds over the country's rangelands. Frequent natural disasters compounded by warfare and political instability make them a high-risk group, but one which contributes significantly to the livestock sector. Many Kuchi pastoralists have settled over the last few decades, having lost most of their livestock through war, prolonged droughts and disease outbreaks. The provision of humanitarian assistance for those still with livestock often includes increased access to animal health services and the provision of feed. In order to build resilience, investments have also been made in developing Community Fodder Banks (CFBs).

Process

CFBs are formed by a group of livestock owners who jointly purchase straw and/or grass in a good rainy season, store it, and then sell it to members over the winter season or during a drought, through a revolving fund system. Where CFBs have professional management, a proper business plan, and a sound membership structure, they have been highly successful. Establishing a medium size fodder bank requires approximately US \$12,500 to cover the building, machinery, equipment, etc. A fodder bank may support 20 to 150 families, keeping up to 100,000 sheep and goats, ranging from 5-500 per household. Settled Kuchi have fewer ruminants than nomadic Kuchi.

A CFB is normally registered under cooperative law and community elders arrange for the election of members. It is often the non-migratory Kuchi that run the CFB. Kuchi women cannot be elected, as stringent cultural restrictions dictate that women cannot be involved in decision making with strangers.

Outcomes

In Afghanistan, girls, adult and elderly women milk the goats, care for the offspring of small ruminants, process wool and hair into carpets and other products, while also making milk products (local soft cheese, yogurt, etc.) and trading them. Recognising the importance of these female-led livestock value chain activities, women have now been organised into 'extension groups' that have representation in CFB structures as co-opted members. The extension groups, working with milk and/or wool, meet regularly; and issues related to fodder and feed can be brought to the CFB management through their representative.

With greater appreciation of their value, women have been provided with churning machines, spinning wheels, training materials, and items to enable them to work in a more hygienic manner. This support and community voice has improved women's position in their households and in the surrounding community. Their work is better valued and women have gained more respect.

Source: de Jonge K and Maarse L (2020) *Gender and livestock in emergencies*. A Discussion Paper for the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) <https://www.livestock-emergency.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/LEGS-Discussion-Paper-Gender-and-Livestock.pdf>

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- ▶ You can access all of the LEGS case studies at [livestock-emergency.net/resources/case-studies](https://www.livestock-emergency.net/resources/case-studies)
- ▶ For more information see the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards Handbook at [livestock-emergency.net](https://www.livestock-emergency.net)

