

The Empowering Jujube grower communities through Group-Based Marketing and Resource Management Project

Jujube:

In culinary terms, **jujubes**, also known as **red dates** or **Chinese dates** are the fruit of the tree, *Ziziphus jujube* found mostly in western part of Afghanistan particularly in Farah province. Based on ancient records (12,000 BC from China) and modern age literatures, the medicinal and nutritional value of fruits appreciated by the consumers and researchers as jujubes play an important role in human nutrition as sources of sugar, vitamins, protein, and minerals. Jujube consumed in fresh and dray form, as it tends to spoil because of high moisture contents, so drying is one of the main widely used method for postharvest preservation of jujube fruits.



In Afghanistan jujube is not yet grown commercially but fruits produced on trees spread out wildly, fetch high price in the local market (up to \$10/kg) due to high demand. As information collected during project implementation, the lake of knowledge and information amongst farming communities and improper pre and post harvest handlings are the main cause for great loss of products during and after production process, before it reach to market.

A view on the project:

The project (*Empowering Jujube grower communities through Group-Based Marketing and Resource Management*) was funded by **UNODC** and implemented by **CHA** (Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance) in two sites (pre-urban area and Posht-e-Koh district of Farah province), started on 1st March 2012 and completed on 30th April 2013. The main **objective** of the project was “*To facilitate the empowerment and raise the incomes of male/female farmer groups involved in growing Jujube by encouraging social and business organization and facilitating more advantageous market linkages in lucrative crop value chains.*” The project successfully completed according to its work plan and the set objectives were achieved along with close coordination of involved stakeholders in provincial and district levels including governmental departments and NGO’s. The project total budget was \$77948 and totally, 96.14% spent.

Project Main Achievements:

1. Totally, **100 beneficiaries** were selected from 44 villages of pre-urban area and Posht-e-Koh district in close coordination with CDC’s according to set selection criteria, and agreed by UNODC and DCN (Directorate of Counter Narcotic). The beneficiaries assisted technically provided through the project as per its objective.



A Jujube orchard established in Posht-e-Koh district of Farah province.

2. During March 2012, totally **100 Jujube standard orchards** designed and established (square and triangular system on half Jerib area), and 8500 Jujube saplings transplanted and the refilling done as well.

3. **6 SHG's** established (3 SHGs in pre-urban area and 3 SHGs in Phosht-e-Koh district) which all the beneficiaries mobilized within the groups. The objective of SHG establishment is to create a cooperative environment among the orchardist to help each other hence improve their productivities as well as marketing capacities in order to increase their income. The established SHGs which consists **15 - 25** active members registered with DAIL.



This picture shows process of working with community in establishment of SHG's

4. In order to build the SHGs' members capacity, totally **8 training** sessions were held to them about Jujube orchard establishment, SHG establishment, mobilization, grafting and pruning, IPM, Jujube cultivation and its agro techniques, post -harvest handling of Jujube and Marketing.

5. A **guideline on jujube production** also developed using lesson learnt during implementation of the project and literature review. Now beneficiaries are practicing the learnt trainings with regard to jujube orchard establishment, maintenance and marketing of the products.



Distribution of IPM tool kits to the beneficiaries, at the end of IPM training workshop.

Future line of works:

The project achieved its goal in the targeted area, but there are several scops to be taken in considration in future projects on jujube: Accurate and relibale data with regard to Jujube value chain is not available in the area, that to be considred in future. **Marketing survey is required to be completed in the area and abroad, and post harvest practicies should be taken in account, such as establishing jujube processing facilities.** As jujbe is drough resistant crop, hence it is recommended to extend the jujbe orchards even in other provinces of Afghanisatan and expansion of such project might be applied which ofcourse lead in reduction of illicit crop cultivation.