

MID TERM EVALUATION REPORT 2026

**Climate Resilience Component of Building Resilience and Addressing
Vulnerability to Emergencies (BRAVE) in Pakistan Programme**





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Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian and development organization dedicated to reducing extreme poverty and supporting vulnerable communities worldwide. Established in 1968 and headquartered in Dublin, Ireland, the organization works in multiple countries across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, focusing on areas such as livelihoods, climate resilience, health, nutrition, education, and emergency response. In Pakistan, Concern Worldwide has been working since 2001, implementing a wide range of programmes aimed at strengthening community resilience, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable livelihoods in regions vulnerable to climate-induced disasters.

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This evaluation was conducted independently by InterAct Consulting. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this report are those of the evaluation team alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Concern Worldwide, Consortium partners, or FCDO.

The development of this report has been a valuable and rewarding process. Evidence-based learning and reflection are essential for understanding ground realities, capturing community voices, and strengthening future interventions.

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InterAct Consulting Team



About the Report

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TECHNICAL PARTNERS	○ Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) ○ HelpAge International, ODI Global
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Acronyms

Acronym	Full Form
3As	Anticipatory, Absorptive, and Adaptive Capacities
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AKAH	Aga Khan Agency for Habitat
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
BRAVE	Building Resilience and Addressing Vulnerability to Emergencies
CBCVAA	Community-Based Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning
CBDRM	Community-Based Disaster Risk Management
CAF	Climate Adaptation Forum
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCRVA	Community-Based Climate Risk and Vulnerability Analysis
CESVI	Cooperazione e Sviluppo (Italian NGO)
CLEWs	Community Livestock Extension Workers
FCRM	Feedback and Complaint Response Mechanism
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DCCAP	District Climate Change Adaptation Plan
DDMA	District Disaster Management Authority
DDMP	District Disaster Management Plan
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EWEA	Early Warning Early Action
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FFS	Farmer Field School
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
GLOF	Glacial Lake Outburst Flood
HEIS	High-Efficiency Irrigation System
HH	Household
IAC	InterAct Consulting Pakistan
ICF	International Climate Finance
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KII	Key Informant Interview
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
LSE	Local Social Enterprise
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NFI	Non-Food Items
ODI	ODI Global

PDMA	Provincial Disaster Management Authority
PMD	Pakistan Meteorological Department
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PPS	Probability Proportionate to Size
PWD	Person with Disability
SADDD	Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UC	Union Council
UCAF	Union Council Climate Adaptation Forum
VCAF	Village Climate Adaptation Forum
VfM	Value for Money
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHH	Welthungerhilfe

Executive Summary

Pakistan ranks among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, with recurrent floods, droughts, heatwaves, and glacial hazards affecting millions. The Building Resilience and Addressing Vulnerability to Emergencies (BRAVE) programme of Concern Worldwide and funded by Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), was designed to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable communities to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to these shocks in Pakistan. The BRAVE programme mainly consists of three phases: (i) Inception Phase (ii) Phase-I and Extension Phase (iii) Phase II.

This Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) report assesses the inception phase, Phase I and its extension phase of the programme (October 2023 – December 2025) implemented in five districts: Nowshera, Charsadda, Chitral (Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa), and Ghizer, and Astore (Gilgit Baltistan). The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, including 1,105 household surveys, 43 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), 21 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and extensive document review. The report is strengthened through quantitative and qualitative inputs from within 6 linked studies, that also supported the overall findings of the Mid Term Evaluation using their evidence inputs into the DAC sections as well as to validate the MTE findings. The evaluation independence is maintained through IAC's position as an external evaluator with no prior contractual relationship to programme implementation.

Key Findings and Achievements of the MTE

The parameter wise key findings from the Mid Term Evaluation are provided below as per the OECD-DAC criteria, which includes relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, coordination and coherence. Additionally, the consultant appraised the BRAVE programme against each of the DAC criteria using a 6-point grading scale ranging from 0 (totally unacceptable performance) to 5 (outstanding performance).

Relevance – Rating: 4 (Very Good):

The programme is well aligned with national climate priorities and local needs. While communities demonstrated awareness of climate risks, the 2025 floods exacerbated their concerns about the increasing frequency and intensity highlighting the scale of climate change and its impacts. BRAVE contributed towards addressing these gaps through localized planning mechanisms, community institutions, and livelihood-focused interventions.

BRAVE Programme ensured targeting using vulnerability criteria in all 5 districts ensuring the diversity in vulnerability matched through the flexible targeting criteria and adaptation to the context to ensure relevance.

Achievements

- Community awareness and preparedness for climate-related risks improved, by 77% respondents have knowledge of evacuation procedures and 67% respondents taking concrete protective response mechanisms including securing crops, adjusting farming activities, and protecting household assets after receiving early warning information.
- The skills training was relevant to the market needs as 64% of respondents believe the trainings fully matched the market needs and 33% of respondents believe partially matched the market needs.
- The climate smart agriculture practices proved relevant to the local context where 76% of respondents perceived it suitable to their context.
- A total of 419 Climate Adaptation Forums (365 VCAFs and 54 UC-CAFs) were established, creating functional platforms for community-led climate planning and decision-making. These forums are officially recognized by the respective district governments and engaged during any resilience related interventions by DDMUs or other development actors.

- 360 Climate Action Plans (CAPs) at village level, 68 Union Council/Village Council level and 5 district level/sub divisional level plans were developed and implemented, translating localized climate risks into structured response mechanisms. All these plans are well acknowledged and appreciated by their respective district level governments such as in district Nowshera, where the Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief (ADC-R) issued a letter of appreciation and acknowledgement for conducting MHVRA in 72 villages and developing CAPs for these villages. The findings of CAPs have been incorporated into the District Climate Change Adaptation Plan (DCCAP) and District Disaster Management Plan (DDMP) of Nowshera. Within that, overall, these plans still need to be integrated in the district level planning at a larger scale and provincial level policy and planning instruments such as the Annual Development Plans and plans of PDMA.
- The programme delivered context-specific interventions across agriculture, livelihoods, and resilience sectors, tailored to district-level climatic and socio-economic conditions, which was express needs as indicated by baseline report and also during engagement with the stakeholders and beneficiaries during MTE.
- BRAVE Programme was able to strengthen linkages between communities and government departments through the knowledge hubs, business hubs, and frequent visits to the communities that enabled improved coordination and alignment with district-level planning processes.

Effectiveness – Rating: 4 (Very Good):

The programme demonstrated strong uptake of interventions across districts. Observed changes are plausibly linked to improved institutional capacity, improved access to inputs and skills for livelihoods, enhanced knowledge, and strengthened community resilience systems. The programme's contribution is considered

plausible given the alignment between needs, intervention packages and observed changes, as well as beneficiaries consistently reporting and linking improvements to programme support in the area of adapting climate smart agriculture practices, improvement in employment and income generation, as well as access to early warnings.

A total of 406,422 individuals (67% of direct beneficiaries) reached in Phase I demonstrated improved resilience, scoring High or Medium on the Household Resilience Index (HRI), as measured by the end-line study in accordance with the ICF KPI-4 methodology. Furthermore, the findings of TPM cycle 2 are also aligned in noting that more than 71% of the direct beneficiaries improved resilience in Phase I target districts.

However, effectiveness varies by geography. The vocational training outcomes were constrained by limited access to start-up capital, tools, and market linkages, in deeper rural areas and valleys, affecting the ability of beneficiaries to translate skills into sustained income, compared to larger towns or areas near mainstream markets (KP lowland districts).

Achievements

- 3,662 individuals were trained in vocational skills, with 1,803 individuals placed in employment, contributing to improved livelihood opportunities as unemployment status reduced from 77% before the programme to 30% after the programme and the monthly income has shifted from 65% with no earnings before the project to 17% after the project, indicating increase in incomes and sources.
- 74,870 women engaged in kitchen gardening; within that, around 78% of women respondents reported improved nutrition and diversity in dietary patterns at household level.
- 515 irrigation and watershed schemes were implemented, significantly improving water access, agricultural productivity and physical resilience as

the qualitative data suggests that the water management time has been reduced significantly and also reduced workload for women.

- More than 71% of the direct beneficiaries reported improved resilience in Phase I target districts, directly contributing at household level such as socio-economic level (unemployment rate dropped from 77% to 30% and income earning from 65% with no earning before programme to just 17% at the time of MTE. , Similarly, for anticipatory capacity, 76% of households reported access to early warning information, 67% translated this information into protective actions for their agriculture, livestock, and other assets, and 77% are aware of evacuation routes during disasters). For adaptation capacity, 61% households reported adapting climate safe alternative off-farm income sources, 59% reported reduction in crop and livestock losses due to adaption of CSA practices, 78% reported food availability and dietary diversity improvement at households due to the adaption of CSA practices, and 82% reported increased crop yields
- Adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture practices resulted in reported yield improvements from 30 maunds/1119 KG to 54 maunds/2014 KG per acre district Nowshera and Charsadda¹.
- The programme was able to engage district governments for supporting the programme interventions for localized integration and possible sustainability. This is evidenced through the recognition of CAFs in all five districts by district governments, appreciation and acknowledgement of CAPs and their contribution into District Climate Change Adaptation Plans and District Disaster Management Plans.

- Vocational skills and technical training delivered strong economic results. Prior to the programme, the proportion of participants earning less than PKR 10,000 increased from 15% to 31%, while those in the PKR 10,001–20,000 income bracket rose from 15% to 22%. Notably, participants in the PKR 20,001–40,000 income category increased from 0% before the programme to 23% afterward.
- 77% of respondents reported that they are aware of evacuation procedures during disasters, indicating that a large majority of households possess critical emergency response knowledge.
- 68% of respondents reported receiving early warning information at least 24 hours before a hazard event, enabling timely preparedness and response actions.

Overall, the programme remained effective, met its objectives, and targets as indicated in the planned vs achieved, exceeding targets across indicators.

Efficiency – Rating: 4 (Very Good):

The programme achieved significant scale within a constrained timeframe. This was made possible through realistic planning, efficient procurement, and the meaningful engagement of local partners whose contextual knowledge proved invaluable at the implementation level. BRAVE programme built on the existing community structures rather than creating parallel ones, which maximised its reach without inflating costs.

Outputs were delivered within the allocated budget and against agreed benchmarks, resulting in strong Value for Money. Most of logframe/activities targets at both annual and overall project levels; were either met or exceeded, indicating strong emphasis on the quality of planning, except where external factors influenced e.g. Punjab government buying out

¹ From Final Project Reports of WHH and CESVI

seeds developed for beneficiaries in highland districts, resulting in a delay providing seeds.

Achievements

- The programme successfully utilized a GBP 15.76 million, of which, GBP 8.91 million was for resilience component. Of this; 8.28 GBP million (93%) has been utilized, within which, the programme versus operation ratio is 70:30%.
- Phase I budget achieved substantial scale and exceeded most of output targets.
- A Programme Management Unit (PMU) was established, integrating technical partners (ADPC, HelpAge, ODI) to strengthen delivery quality and cross-cutting integration.
- Efficiency gains were achieved through leveraging existing community structures, reducing mobilization costs and accelerating implementation.

Impact – Rating: 3 (Good, with Some Gaps) (Contribution-Based Interpretation):

The evaluation observed notable positive changes during and towards the end of programme period. The proportion of households reporting no income declined substantially, alongside reported improvements in food security, livelihood diversification, and adaptive capacity.

These changes are plausibly linked to the combined effect of improved access to inputs, strengthened community institutions, and enhanced knowledge and practices introduced by the programme. However, these outcomes are interpreted as associated changes, recognizing that external factors such as market conditions, recovery from previous shocks, on-going and spiralling climatic disasters (including at the time of MTE in GB and KP), and broader development trends may also have influenced results.

Achievements

- Significant reduction in households reporting no income and increased participation in income-generating activities,

39% of female respondents and 37% of male respondents believe that their income has increased after the skills training under BRAVE programme.

- Improved food security and dietary diversity with 87% achieving food expense savings, particularly through kitchen gardening interventions.
- Reported 76% reduction in water-related conflicts in areas with improved irrigation systems and suggested significant reduction in the water management time.
- 72% of women accessing financial services, resulting into the decrease in no earnings income category from 78% to 28%.
- Evidence of early spillover effects, with practices being adopted in neighbouring communities as FGDs suggest that neighbours are reaching out to them, asking for the techniques, skills, and seeds the beneficiaries are using for increased crop yield and quality products.
- 32% of respondents linked with private sector employers or LSEs, resulting in one of the main reasons of reduction of unemployment rate from 77% before the programme to 30% after the programme.
- 61% of respondents have adapted climate-safe alternative off-farm income sources across all 5 districts, indicating a moderate shift towards livelihood diversification under the BRAVE programme.

Sustainability – Rating: 3 (Good with Risks):

There are early signs of sustainability, particularly in continued use of selected practices and increased institutional engagement. However, sustainability remains uneven and constrained by several factors.

Key risks include continued systemic governance barriers including low effectiveness of government departments, limited financial and operational models for Business and Knowledge Hubs, and market access challenges. Sustainability findings are based on limited verification and self-reported continuation of practices and should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

Local institutions have started to take up the lessons from engagement with BRAVE programme towards providing resilient environment for their respective beneficiaries e.g. DDMU Nowshera adapting the CAP or the education department in Chitral opting to sensitize its teachers on early warnings and receiving timely messages, to provide a safe environment to students.

Observed gains are better understood as early, supported outcomes rather than fully self-sustaining resilience, indicating the need for further transition toward market-based and institutionalized systems.

Achievements

- 365 Village Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs) is critical to long-term success. To ensure these forums do not collapse post-funding, the programme is merging UC-level forums (UC-CAFs) with existing permanent structures such as Local Support Organisations (LSOs) and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), where available.
- Qualitative discussion suggest that the farmers who adopted certified wheat seeds saw yields stabilize at 40–60 maunds (1492-2238 kg) per acre, creating a financial incentive that has led many to store seeds in project-provided hermetic drums for future seasons rather than reverting to low-yield varieties.
- Strengthened institutional linkages with government departments supporting continuity.
- The negotiations skills of women beneficiaries have improved, where 12% reported significant improvement and 44% reported moderate improvement).
- 80% of male respondents believe that women should hold 30% of the executive positions in forums, showing significant shift in male attitude towards female leadership roles.

Coordination and Coherence – Rating: 3 (Good with Gaps)

The programme demonstrated strong internal coordination among consortium partners and alignment with government priorities. The programme actively fostered synergies with complementary initiatives, most notably through joint district Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) development in Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) in collaboration WRAP. These synergies achieved through coordinated planning, systematic data sharing, and the development of unified plans; ensuring coherence, avoiding duplication, and maximising collective impact on the ground.

Achievements

- Strong collaboration among implementing partners.
- Alignment with national and district-level climate priorities.
- Engagement with government institutions and stakeholders
- Establishment of coordination platforms for planning and implementation.

Gender and Inclusion- Cross-Cutting Insights

The programme contributed to increased participation of women and engagement of persons with disabilities. However, inclusion remains uneven, with limited representation in leadership roles and persistent structural barriers to full participation.

Achievements

- Increased participation of women in programme activities and livelihoods as 72% of women have access to financial services
- Over 18,000 persons with disabilities reached through the programme.
- Improved confidence and engagement of women in community processes as 83% of female respondents believe their negotiation skills have improved through forum participation.
- Increased awareness of inclusive practices as 80% of male respondents believe females should hold 30% of leadership roles in forums, and 35%

women's engagement in joint advocacy on climate issues.

- Women participation (40% members in VCAF and UCAF) ensured in community structures.

Key Conclusions

The BRAVE programme has established a strong foundation for climate resilience, demonstrating measurable improvements in livelihoods, institutional capacity, and community preparedness. Its integrated, community-driven model has proven effective at scale, though sustaining these gains will require stronger institutionalization, improved market systems, and continued investment in social transformation.

Key Lessons

The programme demonstrated that operationalising an integrated 3As framework i.e. Anticipatory, Adaptive, and Absorptive capacities, is essential for enabling communities to manage diverse climate risks effectively. This approach ensured that interventions were not mere technical inputs but were part of a coherent system that addressed the structural drivers of vulnerability.

- Establishing 419 inclusive Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs and UCAFs) and their contribution during 2025 floods and also their sustained contributions during last 2 years, proved that building grassroots institutional capacity is the most effective way to ensure community ownership and sustained engagement in climate action. These forums successfully transitioned marginalised groups from passive aid recipients to active leaders in local resilience planning.
- A critical lesson for sustainability is that embedding community-driven data and Climate Action Plans (CAPs) into formal District Development Plans ensures that project gains are institutionalised within state governance. The commitment of provincial authorities to integrate these plans represents a landmark achievement in strategic alignment.

- Beyond mere representation, the programme showed that genuine empowerment for women is achieved through targeted leadership training and the 'Engage with Men' approach, which fosters an enabling social environment and catering to the intricacies of the cultural sensitivities and explicit resistance to women in leadership roles. This was evidenced by the 35% of trained women who now actively participate in joint community advocacy campaigning through the support of UCAFs and VCAFs and also the staff of partner organizations of BRAVE Programme.
- Introducing scientifically validated and contextually imbedded technologies, such as certified climate change resistant seeds and hermetic storage, delivers tangible productivity gains that directly improve household food security. Yield increases of up to 80% in specific value chains evidenced the success of moving from traditional to climate-smart agricultural practices that can improve economic resilience.
- Establishing Knowledge Hubs as consultative platforms between academia, government line departments, and technical experts focusing issues faced by farmers and local entrepreneurs ensured that resilience strategies remained evidence-backed and aligned with provincial policies. This model has been recommended for provincial replication due to its effectiveness in grounding research in local realities.
- Linking vulnerable households to financial services and micro-credit (e.g., through village banks) builds the absorptive capacity required to survive climate shocks without liquidating productive assets. This approach proved essential for enabling the extreme poor and women to invest in diversified, climate-resilient livelihoods practices.
- Moving smallholders into certified commercial value chains (e.g., Global GAP)

demonstrates that small-scale farmers can successfully bypass local middlemen to access higher-yield international markets.

- The MTE learnt that vocational trades, particularly digital freelancing, require a hardware-first approach; for training to be effective in remote areas, it must be synchronized with the provision of laptops, reliable internet, and solar-powered energy solutions to bridge the digital divide.
- It was learnt that to avoid localized market saturation, planning must move beyond village-level trade demand and prioritize establishing structured links between rural artisans and broader urban or international marketing hubs.

Priority Recommendations

- Strengthen the timeliness and context-specific delivery of interventions, especially in geographically challenging and climate-sensitive areas.
- The programme should continue to invest in and strengthen local grassroots-level institutions at village and Union Council (UC) levels. Local grassroots level institutions established and functioning at village and UC level ensuring ground level capabilities for resilience, supporting communities, farmers, businesses and also government.
- Building on existing progress, the programme should deepen institutionalisation within government systems by further strengthening VCAFs and UCAFs, ensuring that Climate Action Plans and resilience mechanisms are sustainably embedded for continuity in local government planning, budgeting, and service delivery.
- While a high proportion of households reported receiving early warning messages in WhatsApp group, reliance still remains on informal, person-to-person communication channels, which was primarily due to the issues with internet, less availability of smart phones and not tuned to new technologies, however the awareness raising by BRAVE programme on disaster and early warnings also supported in the informal communication at VCAF and UCAF Level, connecting them upwards (with DDMUs and

PMD) and downwards (with community members). Efforts should focus on strengthening the linkages between community forum members and the formal EWS to ensure reliable last-mile early warning dissemination.

- To ensure resilience building efforts are grounded in local realities, MH-CCRVA data and Village/UC/District Climate Action Plans (CAPs), should be integrated into the district and provincial level Annual Development Plans (ADPs), enabling CAPs to function as dynamic, government-backed tools for planning and resource mobilization rather than static documents.
- Knowledge Hubs should be endorsed at provincial level and institutionalized to work as independent, district-level knowledge repositories, hosted within government extension systems or academic institutions, building on successful models observed in districts such as Nowshera.
- Community institutions require longer maturation periods to function independently. Phase II should extend the lifecycle of support, enabling forums to develop governance systems, manage records, conduct elections, and engage effectively with government structures.
- Further expand market access and private sector engagement such as collective sales through Business Hubs, branded products through LSE partnerships, or export connections via IHT-style intermediaries, without requiring greater physical mobility than current social constraints allow so beneficiaries can convert skills and production gains into stable income opportunities.
- Some interventions required additional implementation cycles to reach maturity, particularly in livelihood and business development components. Phase II should incorporate a structured post-intervention support phase to nurture emerging practices in challenging climatic and socio-economic conditions.
- Future programming should further expand scalable Nature-Based Solutions, including river channelization approach, which have demonstrated effectiveness in protecting

agricultural land and reducing climate risks. Channelization approaches should be carefully designed to avoid increasing flow velocity and associated risks through stepped approach suggested by local community.

- Field evidence indicates that women's economic resilience improves significantly with access to financial services. Models such as SRSP Village Banks should be scaled to provide sustainable and accessible financing pathways for climate-resilient investments without increasing household vulnerability during shocks.
- Invest more strongly in women's leadership, financial inclusion, and decision-making roles to move beyond participation toward meaningful influence. The programme has achieved significant progress in this area; however, there is still considerable room for improvement. Women are now able to lead their CAFs and actively participate in accessing financial services and livelihood

opportunities. Nevertheless, these advancements must evolve into meaningful and sustained influence. Such transformation requires time, particularly in geographically remote and socially complex regions, as meaningful social change is rarely a short-term process.

- While participation targets for women were achieved, gaps remain in their representation in executive decision-making roles. Future programming should focus on structured leadership development, mentorship, and targeted support to enable women to take on substantive decision-making positions within community institutions, including potential internship pathways within VCAFs and UCAFs.
- Promote a more phased and sustained transition strategy so communities and local institutions can continue progress beyond the programme period.

1.

Background of the Project



Pakistan is among the most climate-vulnerable countries globally, facing increasing frequency and intensity of climate-induced disasters. Despite contributing minimally to global emissions, its geographic diversity and socio-economic conditions amplify exposure to risk. These challenges continue to undermine livelihoods, infrastructure, and long-term development gains.

1.1 Country Context: Pakistan's Climate Vulnerability

Pakistan is ranked among the ten most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, and 5th according to the Global Climate Risk Index, despite contributing less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions. This paradox of high vulnerability and low culpability defines the development challenge that the BRAVE Programme seeks to address.

Pakistan's geography is a profound blend of northern and north-western high mountainous ranges, the plains of the Indus Valley, a coastal strip in the south, and desert in the central and south-eastern regions. This geographic diversity, combined with a population of approximately 225 million people, 35% of whom live below the poverty line, creates profound and layered climate vulnerabilities. In the past decade, recurrent spells of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, glacial lake outbursts, cyclones, and heatwaves have taken a heavy toll on both life and property and have adversely affected the country's economic growth.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) highlights that climate change sensitivity in agriculture-dependent economies such as Pakistan arises from their distinct geography, demographic trends, socioeconomic factors, and lack of adaptive capacity, perpetuating a vicious cycle of poverty. The 2022 floods were particularly catastrophic, affecting over 33 million people across the country, damaging agricultural land, destroying infrastructure, and displacing millions, losses from which many communities have yet to fully recover. In the five BRAVE target districts, the 2022 floods caused: damage to agricultural land (73% of surveyed households), loss of standing crops (67%), loss of fruit orchards (up to 89% in Ghizer and 80% in Astore), and widespread damage to irrigation infrastructure. This was further exacerbated by the flash floods and cloud bursts in 2025 that led to large scale devastation within various districts of KP and GB. The climatic events in the summer of 2025 were of particular concern for the simultaneous, repetitive and intensive nature of the events that highlight the increasingly devastating nature of climate change induced disasters.

1.2 Programme Overview

The (BRAVE) Programme is funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) under the International Climate Finance (ICF) framework. BRAVE is a five year and seven months programme running from January 2023 to July 2028, with a Community Resilience Component budget of GBP 20 million for Phase I. The programme is designed as a consortium, led by Concern Worldwide with the following implementation and technical partners:

Concern Worldwide (Lead)	Overall programme management and coordination
Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)	Partnered with the AKRSP and AKAH, leveraging their extensive history of social mobilization, livelihood development and habitat risk management in Gilgit-Baltistan i.e Ghizer and Astore (GB), and Chitral (KP)
CESVI	Partnered with NIDA Pakistan for implementation in Charsadda, due to the history of work in the area

Welthungerhilfe (WHH)	Engaged LASOONA as its implementation partner in Nowshera, utilizing their specialized expertise in flood-affected agricultural landscapes
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) (Technical)	Provided technical leadership in designing Multi-Hazard Risk Assessments, delivering CBDRM and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) capacity building for staff, and supporting the establishment of community-based early warning systems
HelpAge International (Technical)	providing technical assistance for gender-transformative actions and ensuring that climate adaptation measures effectively integrated the specific needs of older persons and persons with disabilities
ODI (Technical Partner)	Supported the programme in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) while developing the framework to measure and report on the programme's Value for Money (VfM) and transformational change metrics

The BRAVE programme has been implemented over three phases: an Inception Phase (January–September 2023); Implementation Phase I (October 2023–December 2025), including a six-month sustainability and consolidation period; and Implementation Phase II , Scale-Up (July 2025–July 2028).

1.3 Programme Theory of Change

The BRAVE TOC design is effective due to its ability to correctly treat resilience as a multi-level system rather than just a set of technical tasks. Its decision to put women and marginalized groups at the center of all planning was a relevant strategy that successfully built genuine local agency and leadership. Furthermore, its assumptions about government buy-in proved accurate, leading to the landmark success of institutionalising community-led plans into formal state policy for long-term impact.

The design assumes high levels of sustained government cooperation and institutional buy-in at both provincial and district levels to ensure project interventions are aligned with state policies and formally recognized.

- It presumes that target communities will be receptive to resilience measures and willing to participate in new, inclusive governance structures that may challenge traditional social norms.
- The implementation is predicated on the assumption that there will be an absence of large-scale external shocks (beyond the program's planned absorptive capacity) that could disrupt the developmental trajectory of the communities.
- That the successful and parallel operationalization of three distinct pillars: Institutional Strengthening, Social Protection, and Community Resilience.
- The framework assumes that resilience can only be achieved by addressing vulnerabilities simultaneously at the household, community, and public/private sector levels to effectively disrupt cycles of poverty

Concern Worldwide's proposed Theory of Change (ToC) for Component One (Climate Resilience) of BRAVE is based on climate action planning, execution, and transfer of new applicable knowledge and practice. The overarching impact is envisaged as: "Extreme poor and vulnerable people in Pakistan are more resilient to climate-induced risks, shocks and stresses", which will be achieved through an expected outcome: "Empowered resilient communities able to anticipate, adapt to, and absorb the negative impacts of climate hazards and risks." The programme pursues this through five interconnected outputs:



Underpinning resilience outcome is the programme's commitment to gender equality and social inclusion. The BRAVE Theory of Change recognizes that resilience is not gender-neutral: women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and landless households face structurally different vulnerabilities, and any meaningful resilience building must address these dynamics directly through dedicated mechanisms including the 'Engage with Men' approach, leadership training, inclusive forum structures, and the systematic disaggregation of all data and results.

2. Scope and Objectives



This evaluation aims to generate practical, evidence-based recommendations and actionable lessons to strengthen programme performance and adaptive management. It focuses on informing sustainability pathways and guiding the strategic direction for Phase II implementation.

2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this assignment is to conduct a comprehensive Mid-Term Evaluation of Phase I of the BRAVE Programme, covering the implementation of Phase I from October 2023 to December 2025. The evaluation has three primary purposes:



Accountability

Provide FCDO and Concern Worldwide with an evidence-based assessment of Phase I performance against the OECD-DAC criteria, logframe targets, and programme objectives.



Learning

Generate actionable lessons and insights that strengthen adaptive management, identify gaps and inform design refinements for Phase II implementation.



Forward Planning

Produce practical, recommendations for Phase II, with specific attention to sustainability, gender transformation, institutional embedding, and geographic targeting.

2.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this evaluation are to:



Assess programme performance against OECD-DAC criteria, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and coordination/coherence, across all five outputs implemented during Phase I.



Examine the extent to which the programme has strengthened community resilience to climate-induced risks, including the functionality and sustainability of VCAF/UCAF structures, adoption of climate-smart practices, diversified livelihoods, and institutional engagement mechanisms.



Conduct focused outcome and impact assessments on key thematic areas, including gender transformation initiatives, leadership and negotiation skills development, engagement with men, financial inclusion and climate financing models, vocational skills tracer study, and awareness and early warning systems.



Analyze differential impacts across gender, socio-economic groups, geographic contexts (highland and lowland), and vulnerable populations, identifying both intended and unintended effects.



Generate practical, actionable recommendations and lessons learned to inform programme refinement, sustainability strategies, and strategic direction for Phase II implementation.

2.3 Methodology of the Assignment

Keeping in view the rationale, specific objectives, expected outcomes, use and users of the report, the following methodology was adopted for this evaluation.

2.3.1 Evaluation Approach

The Mid-Term-Evaluation employed a utilization-focused, mixed-methods evaluation design. The evaluation is simultaneously formative (concerned with programme improvement) and summative (assessing achievements against benchmarks), though the formative purpose takes precedence.

The evaluation is guided by OECD-DAC quality standards for development evaluation, ensuring transparency, independence, methodological integrity, respect for diversity, partnership with key stakeholders, and alignment with Concern Worldwide's accountability frameworks. Evaluation independence is maintained through IAC's position as an external evaluator with no prior contractual relationship to programme implementation and without any influence by the contracting organization or partners.

The methodology covers a mixed-methods design comprising 1,105 household surveys, 43 KIIs, 21 FGDs, an extensive document review, and six linked studies. It also specifies separate sampling approaches for the thematic studies and applies a criterion-specific evidence-weighting framework to strengthen the triangulation and interpretation of findings across the OECD-DAC criteria.

OECD-DAC Criterion	Household Survey	KIIs and FGDs	Programme and Monitoring Records	Linked Studies and Scorecards
Relevance	30%	35%	25%	10%
Effectiveness	35%	20%	30%	15%
Efficiency	10%	20%	55%	15%
Impact	40%	30%	10%	20%
Sustainability	20%	40%	25%	15%
Coherence and Coordination	10%	40%	40%	10%

2.3.2 Mixed-Methods Design

The evaluation applied an integrated mixed-methods design combining quantitative household surveys with qualitative research approaches. The details are provided in the below table.



1,105

Household Survey



43

Key Informant Interviews



21

Focus Group Discussions



49

Transformational Change scorecard

a. Quantitative Household Survey:

Purpose: Measure change against baseline indicators and to assess outcome-level results and produce SADDD data for a select sample within the overall universe of programme beneficiaries. For indicators with comparable baseline and mid-term samples, the report presents the baseline and endline estimates, the percentage-point change, and the 95% confidence level for the

observed difference. The analysis is anchored in the confidence interval, which provides a margin of error of approximately $\pm 5\%$ at the programme level for the achieved sample of 1,105 households, while a 10% confidence interval is applied for district-level disaggregation. Findings are interpreted based on the reliability of these statistical bounds, alongside the magnitude and practical relevance of the observed changes.

Where the baseline and endline samples are not directly comparable, or where the findings are based on retrospective self-reported responses collected during the MTE, inferential testing is not applied. In such cases, results are presented descriptively as reported or observed changes and are interpreted as contribution-based evidence rather than statistically attributable programme effects. This distinction has been reflected throughout the report.

Target Groups: Households of the target beneficiaries (originally planned 976 however actually achieved. 1105).

District	Study 1 and 6 Awareness & CSA	Study 2 Gender Transformation	Study 3 Climate Finance	Study 4 VCAF + UCAF	Study 5 Vocational Tracer
Nowshera	68	58	15	11	97
Charsadda	124	48	26	12	86
Chitral	70	39	33	13	46
Ghizer	63	37	18	7	26
Astore	108	75	22	6	63
Total	433	257	114	49	318

The study adopted a multi-stage stratified sampling approach across five districts (Nowshera, Charsadda, Chitral, Ghizer, and Astore), ensuring representation of different geographic areas and intervention groups. Separate sample sizes were calculated for each of the six studies due to their distinct target populations and objectives. The sample size for each component was determined using standard statistical methods, assuming a 95% confidence level, $\pm 5\%$ margin of error, and 50% response distribution, which provides a robust basis for generalizing findings. A total of 1171 sample size was covered and during the data cleaning process, 66 collected data were excluded from the total covered sample size making it a total of 1105.

Due to the mobility and seasonal workload of the target population, in some cases snowball sampling strategy was employed to locate available beneficiaries. While this ensured the achievement of the 1,105 household sample size, it necessitates a cautious interpretation of the results as being representative of accessible beneficiaries rather than a purely random cross-section of the entire universe.

b. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):

Purpose: Assess institutional perceptions; explore sustainability dynamics; understand government engagement quality.

Target Groups: Agriculture Extension Department, Social Welfare Department, Trainers of the Vocational and Technical Training, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Specific Beneficiaries (Female Activists & PWDs), Local Support Organizations, District Disaster Management Officers, Members of Business Hub and Knowledge hub and Staff members of BRAVE Programme Team (Concern and Consortium partners).

District	List of KIs Conducted
Nowshera	Director Agriculture Extension Department, Social Welfare Department, Trainers of the Vocational and Technical Training, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Specific Beneficiaries (Female Activists), District Disaster Management Officers, CCRI, AADC Relief, Members of Business Hub and Knowledge hub and Staff members of BRAVE Programme Team (Lasooona).
Charsadda	Director Agriculture Extension Department, Social Welfare Department, Trainers of the Vocational and Technical Training, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Specific Beneficiaries (Female Activists & PWD), District Disaster Management Officers, Members of Business Hub and Knowledge Hub, and Staff members of BRAVE Programme Team (NIDA).
Chitral	Director Agriculture, Assistant Director Livestock Department, DDMU Official, AKF.
Ghizer	LSOs, NGOs, Project Beneficiaries.
Astore	DDMU, Agri, Livestock, AKRSP, PMD, LSOs Gudai, AKF, AKAH.

c. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

Purpose: Explore community experiences, gender dynamics, and behavioral change; triangulate survey findings (21 FGDs with over 230 participants).

Target Groups: VCAFs and UCAFs, target beneficiaries.

d. transformationnel Change Score Card :

Purpose: Structured assessment of VCAF/UCAF depth and functionality.

Target Group: 33 VCAFs and 16 UCAFs

District	List of FGDs Conducted
Nowshera	VCAF: VCAF Yaro Khail, VCAF Misre Banda, VCAF Khashge Payan, VCAF Abba Khail Khashke Payan, VCAF Jana Khel, VCAF Gul Aman Ghari, VCAF Mohalla Banars Khan Kooza Khel, VCAF Barrha Khail. UCAF: UCAF Misre Banda, UCAF Khan Khail, UCAF Banda Sheikh Ismail.
Charsadda	VCAF: VCAF Sheikh Kalay, VCAF Agra, VCAF Arbab Khat Kuruna, VCAF Tora Panra, VCAF Kalyas, VCAF Dheri Zardad, VCAF Pakistan Kali, VCAF Tarnab. UCAF: UCAF Nangyal, UCAF Yosuf Khan Talau, UCAF Dheri Zardad, UCAF Tarnab
Chitral	VCAF: VCAF Awi, VCAF Siwakht, VCAF Shoghore, VCAF Singoor, VCAF Muldeh, VCAF Morio Balla, VCAF Khoghozi 1, VCAF Khoghozi, VCAF Chewdok. UCAF: UCAF Chitral 1, UCAF Chitral Town, UCAF Koh, UCAF Shogore.
Ghizer	VCAF: VCAF Gurunjar, VCAF Chatorkhand, VCAF Golodas, VCAF Silpi. UCAF: UCAF Sherqila, UCAF Chatorkhand, UCAF Bubbur.
Astore	VCAF: VCAF Pakora, VCAF Makiyal, VCAF Mushk, VCAF Gudai. UCAF: UCAF Gudai, UCAF Louse.

e. Documentation Review:

Purpose: Establish baseline evidence; verify output achievements; map programme theory and logframe.

Documents: Baseline report, endline report, Phase I programme completion report, Implementing partner reports, Consortium and nested log frames, Transformational change scorecard template, District wise beneficiaries' data, Post distribution monitoring report, Activity sheets, Tracer study, Impact studies.

f. Grading Scale for DAC Criteria

The report includes an appraisal of how well the BRAVE programme has performed against each of the DAC criteria, using the following grading scale:

Scale	Remarks
5	Outstanding Performance
4	Very good overall performance with few shortcomings
3	Good overall performance but with some minor shortcomings
2	Generally acceptable performance but with some major shortcomings
1	Barely acceptable performance with many major shortcomings
0	Totally unacceptable performance or insufficient data to make an assessment

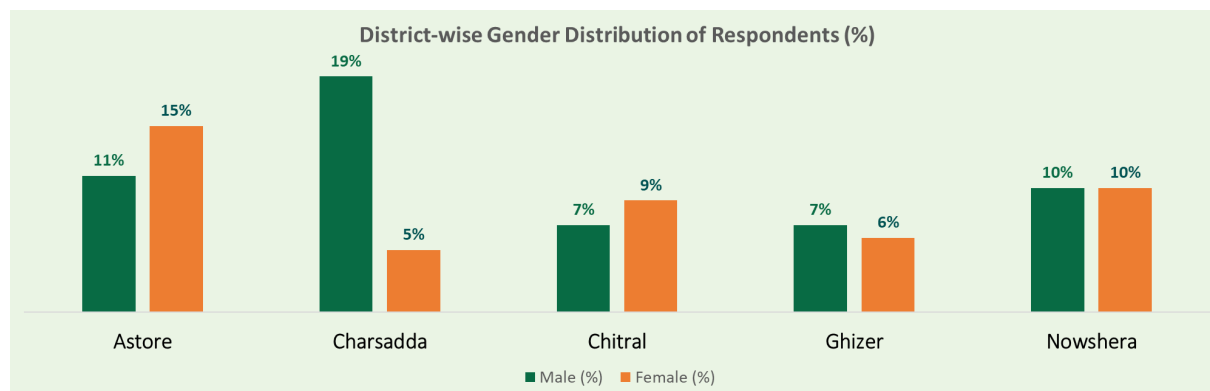
2.4 Limitations and Challenges

The evaluation acknowledges the following limitations:

- The beneficiaries of the programme were mostly busy with their household work on the fields or out of station for income purposes. The MTE used the local focal persons to identify respondents in order to achieve the targets of survey tool.
- Most of the field work was done in very harsh weather as heavy rain continued, especially in district Nowshera and district Charsadda. Chitral district also faced similar situation but not for multiple days.
- The war between Iran and America caused significant cost during the field visits as the petrol prices hiked during the data collection process and have costed more as compared to the initial estimate that were provided during the inception phase. However, Interact team ensured that this does not undermine the methodological rigor and quality of evaluation.
- The evaluation does not include a counterfactual control group. Attribution of changes to programme interventions is therefore based on contribution analysis, examining the plausibility of the programme's causal contribution to observed changes, rather than strict impact attribution.
- An operational limitation was the reliance on local focal persons to identify and coordinate with respondents, due to unavailability for seasonal field work or off-farm employment. While the evaluation maintained its sampling framework, the use of focal persons for respondent identification introduces a potential selection bias, given that focal persons may have identified more successful beneficiaries, which could overstate positive outcomes in the reported findings. To mitigate this, the evaluation team engaged multiple strategies including random beneficiary selection at village level, utilized triangulation through FGDs and back-checked 10% of the surveys to verify the authenticity of the responses.

2.5 Demography of Evaluation

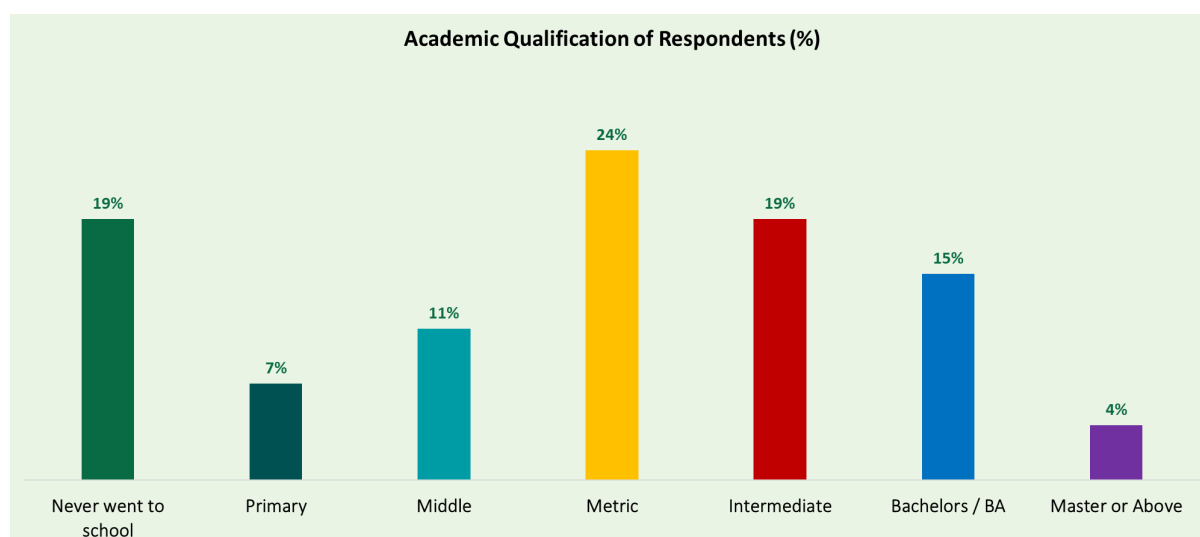
This section provides an overview of the demographics of the survey respondents and their distribution by various lenses, to better understand the context of respondents and responses.



This section presents the demographic profile of respondents who participated in the BRAVE programme mid-term evaluation, covering gender distribution, educational attainment, district-wise geographic spread, and the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs). The following charts provide a detailed descriptive overview of the study population across the five programme districts of Nowshera, Astore, Charsadda, Chitral, and Ghizer.

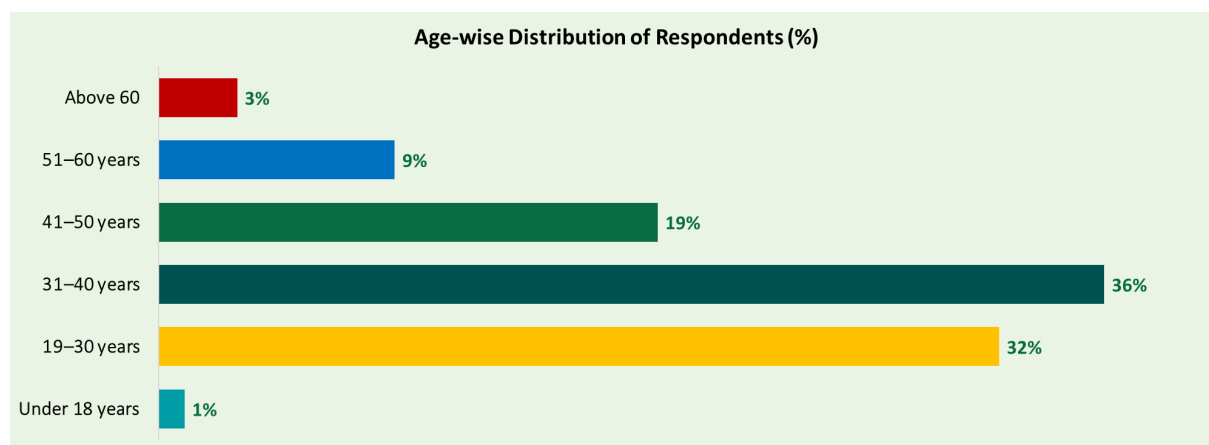
The mid-term evaluation was based on an overall survey sample of 1,105 households, which built upon the benchmark established by the 1,000 households surveyed at baseline. The overall gender ratio of these respondents was 54% male and 46% female, representing a total of 540 men and 460 women at the baseline stage. District-wise gender distribution varies considerably. Charsadda has the highest male representation (19%) but the lowest female representation (5%). Astore and Chitral show stronger female presence (15% and 9%, respectively) compared to males. Nowshera has equal representation (10% each), while Ghizer shows near-parity (7% male, 6% female). Overall, the study covered 54% male and 46% female respondents in these five districts.

The NGO wise distribution of the respondents suggest that the highest percentage of respondents (55%) have been recorded in district Ghizer, Astore, and Chitral where AKF, AKAH, and AKRSP were the consortium partners. Moreover, in district Charsadda, the sample size was 24% where CESVI and NIDA Pakistan were the consortium partners. Similarly, district Nowshera recorded 21% of the respondents and the consortium partners were WHH and LASOONA.

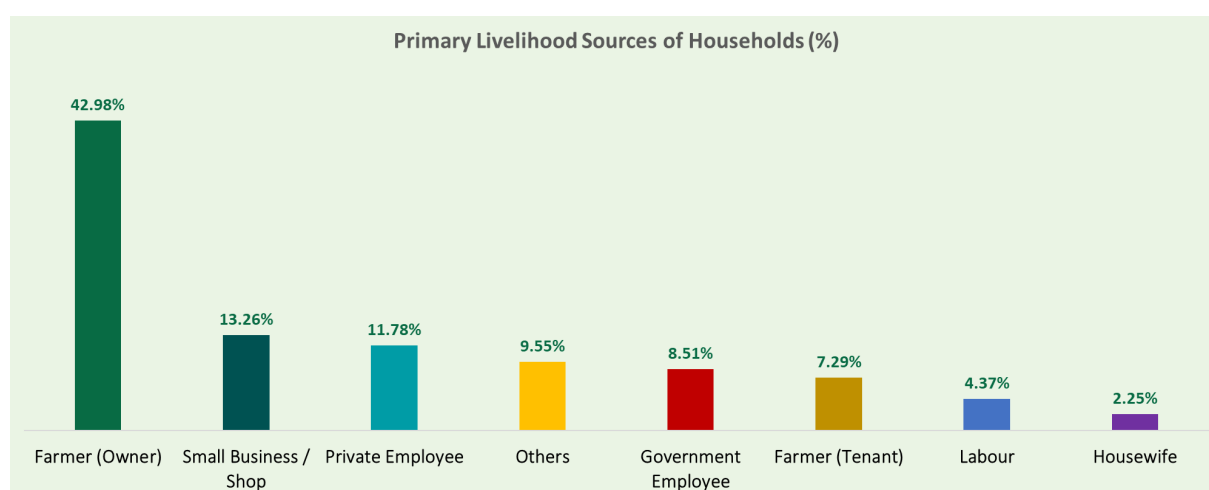


The academic profile of respondents across the five districts reflects a broad and varied educational background, highlighting both persistent gaps in access to education and the presence of comparatively educated segments within the communities. The largest proportion of respondents reported having completed Metric education (24%), followed by those with Intermediate qualifications (19%), suggesting that secondary and higher secondary education levels are relatively common among a significant share of the population. At the same time, an equal proportion of respondents (19%) reported never attending school, indicating that illiteracy and lack of formal education remain major concerns in the target areas.

The findings further show that 15% of respondents possess a Bachelor's degree or BA qualification, reflecting the presence of educated individuals who may contribute positively to local awareness, decision-making, and community engagement processes. Smaller proportions of respondents reported completing Primary education (7%) and Middle education (11%), suggesting that some individuals either discontinued education at early stages or faced barriers in progressing to higher levels of schooling. Meanwhile, only 4% of respondents reported having a Master's degree or above, indicating that advanced higher education remains limited within the surveyed population.



The age wise distribution of the respondents suggest that the majority age group fall under the age between 31-40 years followed by 19-30 years of age of respondents. This makes the majority of youth respondents of the study, Moreover, other age groups include 41-50 years (19%), 51-60 years (9%), above 60 years (3%).

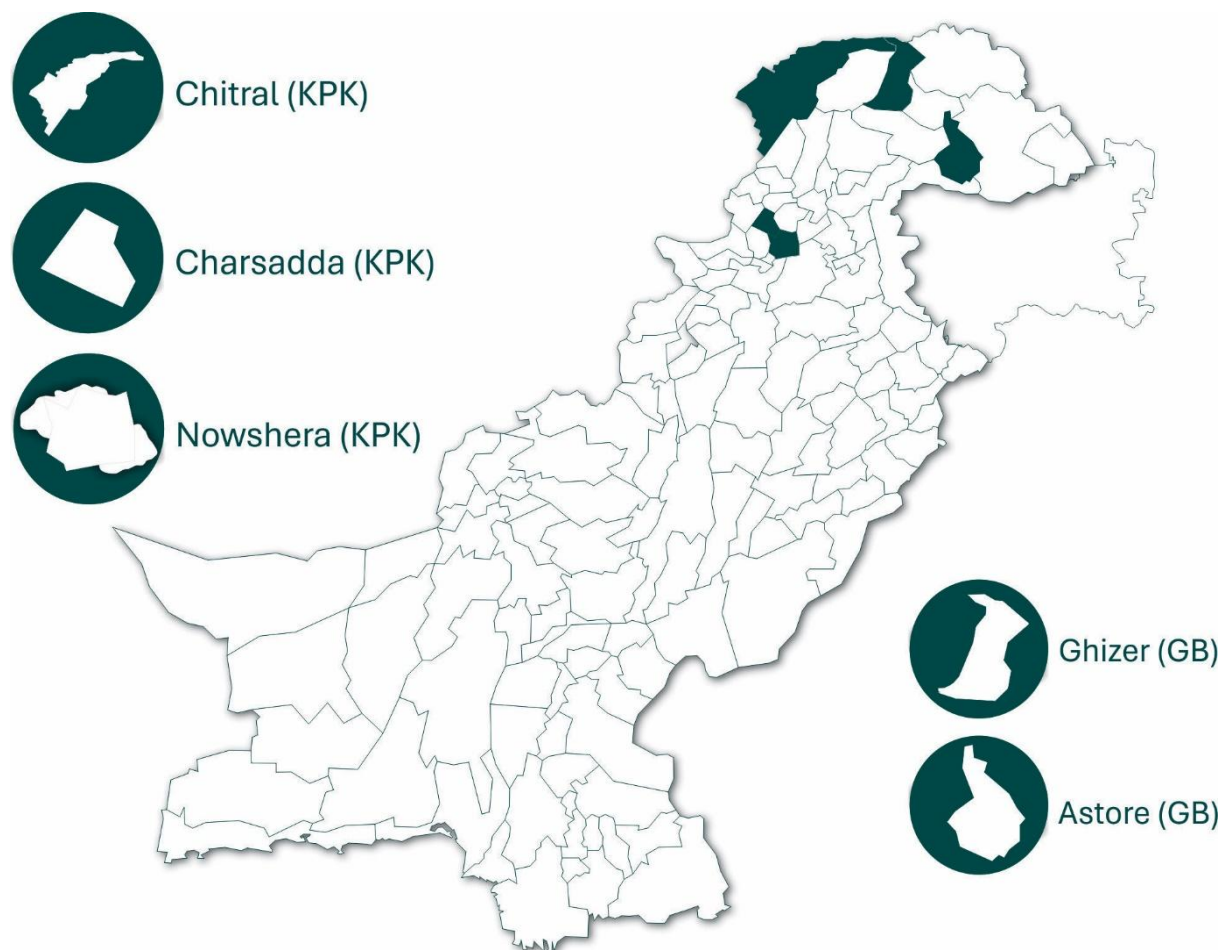


Farming (owner cultivation) emerged as the dominant pre-programme occupation, representing 42.98% of respondents and highlighting the predominantly agrarian nature of the target areas and the heavy reliance of households on agriculture-based livelihoods. This reflects the importance of climate-sensitive farming systems within the programme districts, where household income, food security, and resilience are closely

linked to agricultural production. Small business/shopkeeping (13%) and private sector employment (12%) constituted the next most common livelihood categories, indicating the presence of modest livelihood diversification beyond agriculture. Additional occupational groups included government employees (%), tenant farmers (7%), daily wage labourers (4%), and housewives (2%), reflecting a mixed but still largely rural and informal livelihood economy across the programme areas.

Among the 3% of respondents with disabilities at household level from the overall study population, Astore accounts for the largest share (39%), followed by Charsadda (30%). Chitral (19%), Ghizer (8%), and Nowshera (5%) have considerably lower proportions. In terms of the types of disability (out of the 3%), difficulty walking is the most common disability, affecting nearly half (58%) of PWD respondents. Difficulty speaking (14%), difficulty hearing (10%), among others. Smaller proportions report difficulty seeing (9%), difficulty with self-care (6%), and difficulty with memory or concentration (3%).

2.6 Geographical Outreach of the review



2.7 Assessment of Planned Vs Achievement of Targets of BRAVE Programme2

S. #	Output/Activities	Unit	Targets	Achieved	Beneficiaries Reached		
					Individuals	Male	Female
Output 1: Inclusive Climate Adaptation Forums formed which are implementing Climate Action Plans at different administrative levels (village, union council, Tehsil/Taluka & District)							
1.1	Formation of Village Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs)	Forums/ Groups	360	360	7,087	4,826	2261
1.2	Formation of Climate Adaptation Forum (UC-CAF) at UC level	Forums/ Groups	45	68	625	555	70
1.3	Capacity building and conducting Community-Based Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning (CBCVAA) at the household, village and UC level	Plan	414	428 (Village Level 360, UC/VC level 68)	2,455	1,566	889
1.4	Establishing linkages and supporting DMAs to incorporate climate change adaption and anticipatory action in their plans	Advocacy	5	5	125	102	23
S. #	Output/Activities	Unit	Targets	Achieved	Beneficiaries Reached		
					Individuals	Male	Female
1.5	Awareness Raising and communication on potential impacts of climate change and mitigation measures	Campaign	360	369	7,995	3,849	4,146
1.6	Consultation with Govt Stakeholders for innovative and scalable climate adaptation models	Meetings/ Event	50	50	442	311	131
1.7	Strengthening inter / intra committee dialogue to foster increased inclusion in decision making structures	Sessions	5	5	244	158	86
1.8	Conducting CCRVA		213	225	7,489	4,911	2,578
Output-2: Climate vulnerable communities and at-risk HHs are taking up more climate resilient and diversified livelihoods pathways							
2.1	Policy research on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA), Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Watershed management in coordination with Knowledge Hub	Hub	5	5	163	94	69
2.2	Male Farmer Field School on climate Smart Agriculture and Conservation Agriculture practices through knowledge hubs.	FFS	360	377	5,856	5,856	0
2.3	Women Farmer Field School on climate Smart vegetable gardens, Livestock management practices, fodder preservations, vaccination/deworming etc.	FFS	360	409	7473	0	7473

² Source: Concern provided Planned Vs Achieved sheet

S. #	Output/Activities	Unit	Targets	Achieved	Beneficiaries Reached		
					Individuals	Male	Female
2.4	Piloting/up scaling Climate Smart homestead vegetable gardening plots	Plots	91,000	74,870	524,090	272,527	251,563
	Climate Smart Agriculture practices for crop improvements	Plots	2,520	3,779	3,779	3,719	60
2.5	Climate resilient Fruit orchards	Demo	1,800	2,546	2,446	2,406	40
2.6	Piloting of local seed banks and hermetic technology through innovative business models in collaboration with Research Institutes, Academia and FSCR&D (Provision of Hermetic Drum (2 drums)	Seed Banks	360	360	360	360	21
2.6.1	Provision of hermetic Bags (5 bags)		234	234	234	234	0
2.7	Piloting Government Clean Green Pakistan agroforestry models (Miyawaki)	Models	720	720	543	543	0
2.8	Watershed/ Water management and piloting water conservation models High Efficient Irrigation Systems (HEIS) through private sector engagement	Systems	503	515	721,000	374,920	346,080
S. #	Output/Activities	Unit	Targets	Achieved	Beneficiaries Reached		
					Individuals	Male	Female
2.9	Community level Eco-DRR and Nature Based Solutions as per COP 28 commitments	Meetings	30	32	425	324	101
Output-3: Climate sensitive private sector pathways developed for priority actions that generate financing and jobs.							
3.1	Piloting of Business Hub at union council and district level	Hubs	5	5	154	113	41
3.2	Identification and piloting of economically-viable and market-driven value chains	Study/VC	3	3	0	0	0
3.3	Market oriented inclusive livelihoods (skills development) for women, and landless men	Persons	3,600	3,662	3,653	1,716	1,937
3.4	Placement of trained male and female trainees with private sector for 4 - 6 months in line with graduation model	Persons	1,800	1,803	1,803	954	849
3.5	Linkages of women skilled trainees with national and international markets through LSEs	Persons	1,800	1,800	1,800	0	1,800
3.6	Promotion of Climate Resilient value chains	VC	720	720	720	430	288
3.7	Piloting of climate-financing models and financial	model	5	5	0	0	0

S. #	Output/Activities	Unit	Targets	Achieved	Beneficiaries Reached		
					Individuals	Male	Female
	inclusion strategies particularly for women						
Output-4: Climate sensitive public sector pathways for priority sector/s that generate climate knowledge, promote risk-sensitive practices including risk financing							
4.2	Consultation/ engagement with Component II delivery partner (Institutional Strengthening) for developing climate change adaptation (CCA) plans	Meetings	15	16	44	27	17
4.3	Engagement with and capacity building of line departments for inclusive, gender-responsive CCA planning and service delivery	Workshops / Trainings	45	45	847	556	291
4.4	Engagement with Business and Knowledge Hubs to demonstrate/ pilot of workable climate adaptation models	Meetings	15	15	72	51	21
4.5	Rolling out of National Adaptation Plans on CC	Plans	5	5	135	105	30

3.

Key Findings from the Evaluation



The key findings highlight the programme's strong performance in enhancing community resilience, improving livelihoods, and strengthening institutional capacities across target districts. They also identify critical gaps in implementation, coordination, and sustainability that require focused attention in the next phase.

3.1 Relevance



Pakistan is ranked as the 5th most climate-vulnerable nation globally, characterized by a fragile landscape where northern mountain ranges face increasing GLOFs and lowland plains suffer from recurrent, devastating floods. The relevance of the BRAVE programme is anchored in its strategic alignment with the National Climate Change Policy, bridging the gap between national frameworks and the specific socio-economic needs of Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By operationalizing an integrated "3As" resilience framework, the intervention builds the capacity of the most at-risk households to anticipate, adapt to, and absorb the impacts of climate-induced shocks and stresses. This relevance is institutionalized through a locally led, participatory planning model, where 419 inclusive forums developed validated Climate Action Plans (CAPs) that directly translate community-identified risks into a roadmap for adaptive action.

The selection of Nowshera, Charsadda, Chitral, Ghizer, and Astore as Phase I implementation districts was highly relevant to building community capacity to anticipate, adapt, and absorb shocks in the world's 5th most climate-vulnerable nation. These areas address Pakistan's dual risk profile i.e. highland districts (Chitral, Ghizer, Astore) are situated in fragile ecosystems prone to GLOFs, flash floods, and avalanches etc, where erratic precipitation directly impacts glacier-fed yields, while lowland districts (Charsadda, Nowshera) face recurrent riverine floods that previously damaged 73% of agricultural land e.g. in 2010 and 2022 floods among other floods. This strategic targeting filled a critical institutional void identified at baseline, where 92% of households relied on informal warnings and only 36% felt capable of taking proactive action within 24 hours of a disaster.

Technical interventions, such as the introduction of certified, climate resilient seed varieties and high-efficiency irrigation schemes, Artificial insemination for livestock, were meticulously tailored to the specific agro-climatic needs of each district, resulting in tangible productivity gains and enhanced household food security. Furthermore, the programme's commitment to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) addressed deep-seated social needs for agency, successfully empowering women and persons with disabilities to transition from passive aid recipients to active leaders in local resilience governance. Below is the detailed response to each evaluation question under the TORs;

a. Relevance of programme's objective and activities to community priorities and needs

The BRAVE programme's objectives were highly aligned with Pakistan's status as one of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations, specifically addressing the "3As" (Anticipatory, Absorptive, and Adaptive) capacities required to survive recurrent floods, GLOFs, and heatwaves. Baseline data highlighted a critical need for structured interventions, as 92% of households relied on informal warning channels and only 36% felt capable of taking action 24 hours before a disaster. By the end of Phase I, A total of 406,422 individuals (67% of 606,600 direct beneficiaries) reached in Phase I demonstrated improved resilience, scoring High or Medium on the Household Resilience Index (HRI), as measured by the end-line study in accordance with

the ICF KPI4 methodology. (Furthermore, TPM cycle 2 also confirmed that more than 71% of the direct beneficiaries improved resilience in Phase I target districts.

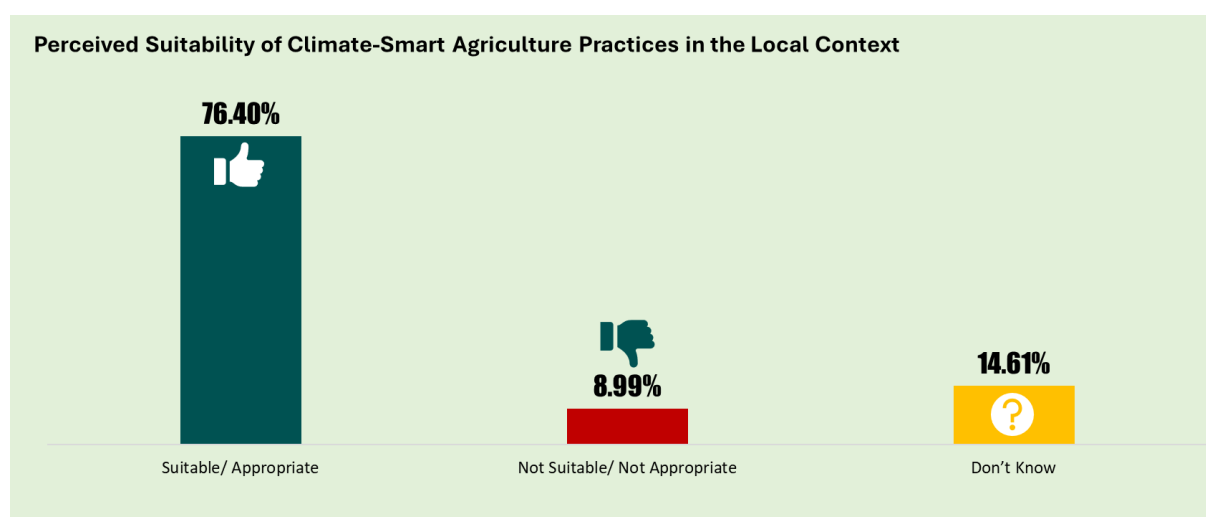
Qualitative evidence from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) underscores the relevance of specific activities to local geographical hazards. In Astore, the formation of 41 Village Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs) allowed residents to develop five-year Climate Action Plans (2023–2028) that prioritized immediate local needs, such as the restoration of irrigation channels destroyed by the 2024 floods. Similarly, in flood-prone districts like Nowshera, the introduction of climate-resilient wheat and maize seeds was described by beneficiaries as vital, boosting yields and economic status in villages severely impacted by previous floods.

The programme's focus on diversified livelihoods and gender inclusion met urgent socio-economic needs identified at the baseline. Output 2 and 3 interventions, such as kitchen gardening for 74,870 women and vocational training for 3,662 individuals, provided pathways for economic resilience in agrarian communities where only 5% of households previously had diversified income. FGDs in Charsadda and Nowshera highlighted that kitchen gardening significantly improved winter nutritional intake, while vocational training in mobile repairing allowed graduates to triple their monthly incomes from 15,000 to 45,000 PKR. Furthermore, the transition to all-female VCAFs in some regions, like Gudai in Astore District, reflected the programme's adaptive relevance in ensuring that women who were often more active and consistent in participation than men had a central role in climate planning.



Figure 1: FGD conducted with VCAF members in District Astore

b. Perception of Respondents on the Suitability of CSA Practices (output 2) to Local Context



This chart measures the perceived appropriateness of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) interventions introduced during Phase I of the BRAVE programme. This analysis aligns with the OECD-DAC criterion of Relevance, as it evaluates whether the programme's technical solutions were tailored to the specific agro-climatic and socio-economic needs of the target areas. The data falls under Output 2, which focuses on

at-risk households taking up more climate-resilient and diversified livelihood pathways. Specifically, these interventions included the distribution of certified, climate resilient seed varieties, the implementation of improved agronomic practices like line sowing and organic composting (Bokashi), and the introduction of advanced technologies including hermetic seed storage and High-Efficiency Irrigation Systems (HEIS).

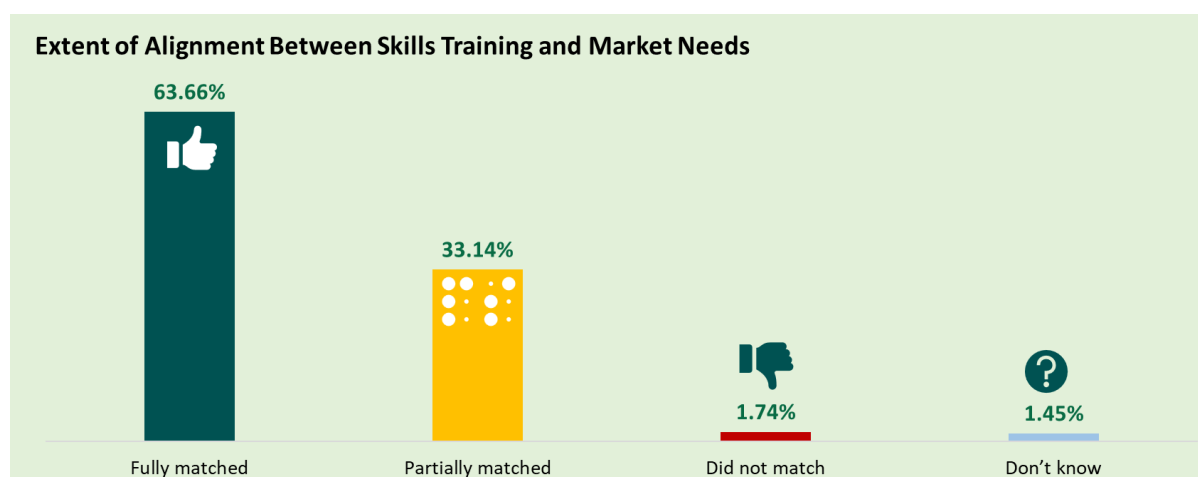
A significant majority of respondents (76%) found the CSA practices suitable for their local context. This high score is likely a result of the programme's bottom-up planning approach, where 360 Village Climate Adaptation Plans (CAPs) and 68 Union Council Climate Adaptation Plans were developed using localized Multi-Hazard Risk Assessments (MH-CCRVA), farmer field schools' approach and validated through Knowledge Hubs comprising local agricultural experts and academic researchers. All these plans are well acknowledged and appreciated by their respective district level government such as in district Nowshera where the Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief issued a letter of appreciation and acknowledgement for conducting MHVRA in 72 villages and developing CAP for these villages. The findings have been incorporated into the DCCAP and DDMP. Within that, these plans are still needed to be included fully in the district and provincial level policy and planning stages such as the Annual Development Plan or District Development Plan.

The suitability is evidenced by tangible productivity gains. In Charsadda, the introduction of certified wheat seeds (*Pir Sabaq 2021*) and ARI-recommended tomato seeds resulted in yields increasing from 300 (11190 kg) to 450 maunds (16785 Kg) per acre, even during heatwaves that destroyed traditional crops. Similarly, in Nowshera, farmers producing maize seeds under CCRI guidance sold their yield for 8,000 PKR per 50kg, nearly triple the market rate of 3,000 PKR, demonstrating the high economic relevance of the chosen varieties.

At the start of the programme, the baseline reported that 41% of the population were adopting CSA practices, but these were largely "informal" or traditional methods. The current findings suggest that the BRAVE programme has introduced scientifically validated and high-performing techniques (e.g., line sowing, organic fertilizers, and hermetic storage) that communities now recognize as beneficial for their farming.

The 9% "No" and 15% "Don't Know" responses point toward geographic and logistical challenges. In highland districts (Astora and Ghizer), the relevance of interventions was sometimes undermined by "agro-climatic synchronization", where seeds arrived a month late, making them unsuitable for the short mountainous growing season. Furthermore, some interventions, like Artificial Insemination (AI) for cattle, were successful in lowlands compared to colder regions like Gudai in GB due to extreme temperatures and poor animal nutrition.

c. Perception of Respondents regarding relevance of Skill Development Trainings



This chart evaluates the Relevance (OECD-DAC criterion) of the vocational and technical training provided under Output 3, which focuses on developing climate-sensitive private sector pathways for financing and employment. It measures the degree to which the 3,662 individuals trained during Phase I feel their new skills align with the economic realities and job opportunities in their respective districts. The chart shows a strong positive trend, with 64% stating the training "Fully matched" and 33% stating it "Partially matched" market demand. Out of these, 77% stating that their income has increased under the BRAVE programme of skills training and market needs.

At the start of the programme, the baseline reported that only 5% of households had diversified income sources, with 33% of the population dependent on low-skill daily wage labour. The fact that 97% of respondents now see at least a partial match with market demand indicates that BRAVE successfully identified and filled critical skill gaps in the local economy.

The 64% "Fully Matched" result is driven by technical trades with high local demand. For example, in Nowshera, mobile repair and electrical graduates tripled their monthly incomes (from PKR 15,000 to PKR 45,000) because they provided services previously unavailable in their villages. In Chaturkhand (District Ghizer), a beautician trainee (Mubeena) began earning PKR 100,000 per month, a result so significant it shifted household decision-making power.

The 33% "Partially Matched" segment highlights two specific challenges identified in the specialized studies. In some villages, too many women were trained in tailoring and embroidery, leading to a situation where they had "no one to sell to" within their immediate community. Digital skills training (freelancing) was highly relevant in theory but faced a "digital divide" in highland districts like Astore and Ghizer. Trainees reported that without laptops, reliable electricity, and internet, the training remained largely theoretical and difficult to translate into income.

It was also found that employability rose from 25% at baseline to 42% post-training, demonstrating that the market was indeed ready to absorb these new skills and there was a benefit of the trainings for those who actively pursued the career.

d. BRAVE Contribution towards self-initiatives and mobilization by beneficiary Communities

Evidence from the evaluation indicates that the BRAVE programme has successfully transitioned from external facilitation to genuine community and individual self-mobilization. At the institutional level, the programme's success has prompted local government bodies to adopt its methodologies independently. In Chitral, the District Disaster Management Unit (DDMU) reported that the Education Department has begun mimicking BRAVE's CBDRM initiatives in schools after witnessing their impact on local resilience. Similarly, as per the VCAF members in Gul Aman Ghari of District Nowshera, the formation of "DEWA" (in Pashto language and has literal meaning of a lamp light and symbolic meaning of light, guidance, or knowledge), which is an organization in making by the VCAF members and community members, serves as a significant example of community-led initiative, where residents independently contribute funds to support widows and the poor, inspired by the collective action framework of the VCAFs.

Household-level mobilization is most evident in the financial and technical ownership of agricultural improvements. Beyond the initial seed distribution and yield increases noted in the relevance section, 1,084 farmers in Charsadda demonstrated commitment to sustainability by paying 50% (300 PKR) of the registration fees to enroll in Model Farm Services. This voluntary contribution secures their independent access to government subsidies and technical inputs without project assistance. Furthermore, in the Naga area of Astore, households have moved beyond the project's initial scope by independently utilizing tunnel farming for onions, creating a year-round harvest that eliminates their dependence on external markets.

Individual self-initiative is highlighted by the transformation of vocational graduates into independent entrepreneurs. Following the significant income gains previously mentioned for mobile repair and beautician trainees, many have taken the initiative to independently expand their businesses. For example, mobile technicians in Nowshera have moved from simple repair work to establishing dedicated stations

and purchasing their own equipment. In Chaturkhanda (District Ghizer), the success of female trainees has not only led to household financial stability but has also resulted in a shift in family decision-making power, as these women now lead discussions on household expenditures and children's education.

Finally, a shift in community mindset regarding disaster preparedness reflects deep-seated self-mobilization. In Pir Sabaq (District Nowshera), residents have independently institutionalized the project's warning protocols, utilizing mosque announcements and WhatsApp groups to alert the community and move livestock to safety hours before floodwaters arrive, without waiting for support from outside. A notable instance of technical self-initiative occurred in Gurenjer (Ghizer), where the community took the lead in adapting the physical design of a water supply scheme, increasing its height specifically to ensure that future floodwaters would pass underneath safely. These instances confirm that the "3As" resilience model is being sustained through local agency and independent action.



e. Spillover Effect of BRAVE Programme

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) indicates evidence of spillover effects, where ideas and practices introduced by the BRAVE programme have begun to spread to neighboring villages and government institutions not directly targeted by the project. Institutional mimicry is particularly evident in Chitral, where the District Disaster Management Unit (DDMU) reported that the Education Department has independently begun mimicking BRAVE's CBDRM initiatives in schools after observing their effectiveness in improving local resilience. At a provincial level, the success of the Nowshera Knowledge Hub has led district authorities to formally propose its replication to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while the Cereal Crops Research Institute (CCRI) has officially recommended the programme's Farmer Field School (FFS) and hermetic storage models for scale-up across the province.

At the community and household levels, the spread of project ideas is primarily driven by peer observation of agricultural success. In Ghizer, the evaluation captured instances where farmers from non-project villages approached BRAVE beneficiaries to demand high-yield wheat seeds after witnessing their superior performance; for example, a beneficiary in *Silpi* village was approached by an individual named Muzaffar Shah from an adjacent village specifically for this purpose. In Charsadda, participants in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) noted that people from "padosi gaon" (neighboring villages) have approached them to learn about new planting methods and to purchase stored project seeds, which the project households had intentionally saved to meet this growing external interest.

Structural and social innovations are also showing signs of independent replication. The Transformational Change Scorecard utilized during the MTE specifically tracks Dimension 5 (Scale, Sustainability, and Replicability), which has documented signals that neighboring villages are independently copying the

forum's resilient planning structures and climate-smart models without direct project facilitation. Additionally, the LSO leadership in Bobur reported receiving phone calls from chairmen and secretaries of other Union Councils who, having heard of the "high-quality seeds" and technical trainings provided in the project area, sought guidance on how to implement similar models in their own jurisdictions.

While these instances provide strong qualitative evidence of replication, some stakeholders noted that the full extent of these spillovers may take longer to manifest. In Chitral, agricultural officials emphasized that while the peer group influence is clear, the long-term impact on non-project areas often requires more time to become "explicit" beyond immediate seed sharing. However, the fact that government line departments are already adopting BRAVE's supported tools and platforms, such as the DDMU "owning" the PMD led WhatsApp Early Warning groups and utilizing VCAF volunteers during monsoon monitoring, suggests that the programme's methodology is being institutionalised beyond its original village-level scope.

3.2 Effectiveness



The BRAVE programme successfully met and exceeded its primary Phase I outcome targets, documenting a total of 406,422 individuals (67% of 606,600 direct beneficiaries) reached in Phase I demonstrated improved resilience, scoring High or Medium on the Household Resilience Index (HRI), as measured by the end-line study in accordance with the ICF KPI4 methodology. (Furthermore, TPM cycle 2 also confirmed that more than 71% of the direct beneficiaries improved resilience in Phase I target districts.

Within that, Early warning systems strengthening efforts proved effective in reaching and mobilizing communities; 76% of households reported access to early warning messages, with 71% specifically receiving PMD forecasts, while 67% translated this information into concrete protective actions for their agriculture, livestock, and other assets. 77% of respondents are aware of evacuation procedures during disasters, indicating that a large majority of households possess critical emergency response knowledge. 68% of respondents reported receiving early warning information at least 24 hours before a hazard event, enabling timely preparedness and response actions and 67% of respondents took concrete protective action after receiving early warning information; including securing crops, adjusting farming activities, and protecting household assets.

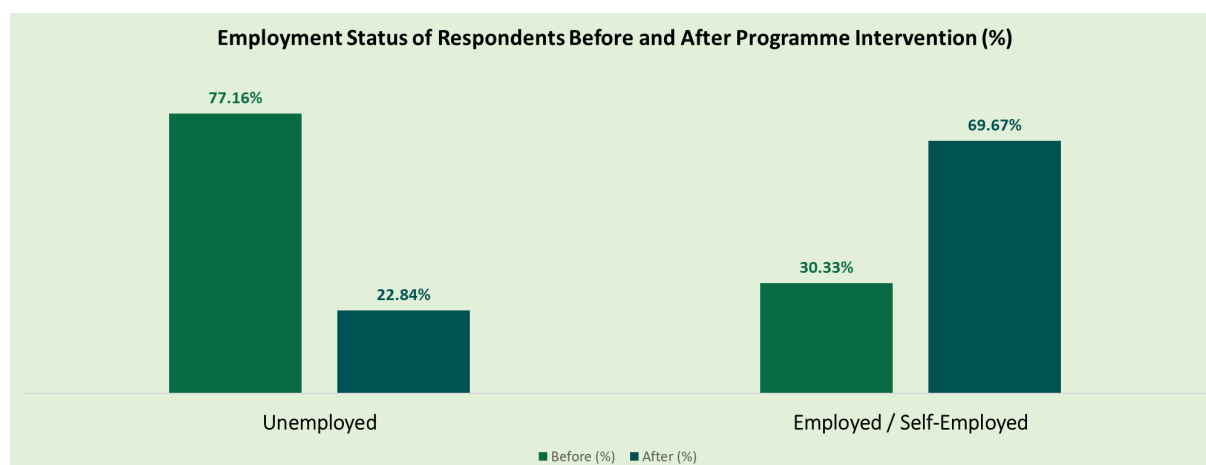
Institutional effectiveness was realized through the establishment of 360 Village Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs) and 68 Union Council Climate Adaptation Forums (UC or VC-CAFs) all recognized by the district governments in these five districts, which exceeded the initial Phase I target of 394 total forums. These forums were instrumental in the development of Village Council-level Climate Adaptation Plans (CAPs) and Multi-Hazard Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (MH-CCRVA) that were formally validated and endorsed by district authorities. [4-BRAVE Phase I - Completion Progress Report, Resilience, Section 29; Document 8, CESVI Partner Progress Report, Output 1, Section 217] A landmark achievement in institutional integration was observed in Chitral, where the District Disaster Management Unit (DDMU) confirmed that the Education Department has begun mimicking BRAVE's school CBDRM models due to their success in improving local resilience. [FGDs and KIIs, KII with DDMU]



Socio-economic outcomes were primarily driven by significant productivity gains in agriculture and diversified livelihoods, benefiting the extreme poor, landless households, and women. In the lowlands (Charsadda and Nowshera), the introduction of certified wheat seeds (Pir Sabaq 2021) and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) led to yields increasing from an average of 30 maunds³ ((1119 kg) to 54 maunds (2014 kg) per acre. Furthermore, 74,870 women benefited from kitchen gardening, with 98% of surveyed practitioners in Nowshera reporting improved household nutrition and 87% reporting a monthly food expense reduction of up to PKR 5,000.

Comparative analysis of monthly income levels indicates a reported fundamental transition into the cash economy, with households reporting a reduction in 'no income' status from 65% to 17%. While these trends suggest a significant positive trajectory, they are interpreted through a contribution lens as perceived socio-economic changes, acknowledging that self-reported data may be influenced by external market trends and recall bias. Similarly, the reported 59% reduction in crop and livestock losses reflects the beneficiaries' perception of improved absorptive capacity following the adoption of improved CSA practices.

The below graph shows the comparison between the current employed and unemployed responses and the respondents with no income before the project. The data for employment status of the respondents before the project intervention suggests that 77% of respondents were unemployed, and after the project intervention it drops to 23% with the increase in employment status and hence income generation status to 70%.



However, the extent of these achievements was constrained by geographic variances and systemic dependencies. In highland districts like Astore and Ghizer, in year one the late delivery of seeds (one month) meant that crops like maize not fully matured to produce grain before the season ended, limiting the effectiveness of Output 2 in those regions. [FGDs and KIIs, Synthesis of Agricultural Outcomes, Section 515] Additionally, while yields increased, the Mid-Term Evaluation found that many farmers have become dependent on expensive fertilizers and nutrients provided by the project, raising concerns that the most vulnerable may struggle to maintain these gains independently. [FGDs and KIIs, Input Dependency, Section 515; AKF Report, Key Recommendations, Section 107] Finally, while 1,036 government officials were trained, large-scale policy integration remains in the "early evidence" stage, as data gaps persist regarding the actual allocation of district budgets for the developed Climate Action Plans. [4-BRAVE Phase I - Completion Progress Report, Narrative, Section 124; Document 5, Nested Logframe, Section 208]

a. Comparative Analysis: Monthly Income Levels (Pre- vs. Post-Programme using Recall Method)

The chart evaluates the Effectiveness and Impact (OECD-DAC criteria) of the programme's livelihood interventions under Output 2 and 3. They measure the programme's success in transitioning households

³ One maund is equal to 37.3 kgs

from subsistence or zero-income status into active participation in the cash economy through vocational training and toolkit provision.

Income Category	Before Programme (%)	Current (%)
No Earnings	64.83%	16.57%
Low Income (< PKR 10,000)	15.41%	30.52%
Lower-Middle Income (10,001–20,000)	14.83%	22.38%
Middle Income (20,001–40,000)	0%	22.97%
Upper-Middle Income (40,001–60,000)	0%	6.98%
Higher Income (60,000+)	0%	0.58%

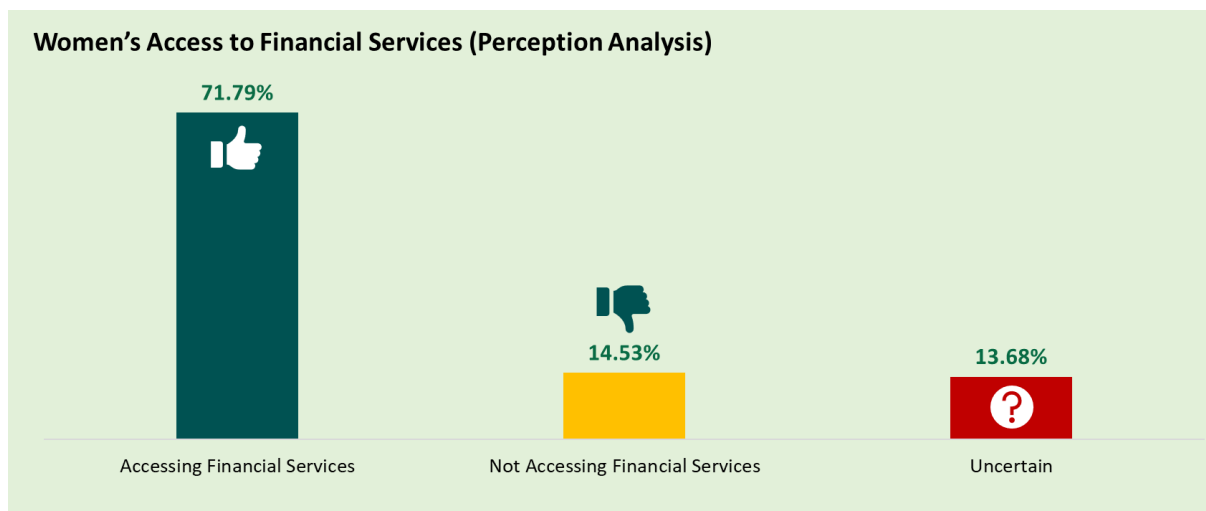
When asked about the income categories of respondents before the programme and after the programme, comparative analysis of income levels indicates a substantial shift in the economic status of participants, with households reporting "no income" reduced from 65% before the project to 17% at the mid-term. While this suggests a fundamental transition into the cash economy, it must be interpreted within the methodological limitations of the study. Specifically, as noted in Section 2.4, these results are subject to recall bias, as respondents were asked to benchmark current status against conditions prior to October 2023. Additionally, because the data is derived from two different survey samples of the beneficiary population rather than a longitudinal panel, the figures reflect population-level trends rather than the tracked progress of specific individuals.

While negligible at baseline, 0.58% of respondents now earn above PKR 80,000. An example is Mubeena in Chaturkhand (GB), and Salma in Gurunjar, beauticians who now earns up to PKR 100,000 monthly, a result that has shifted her power in household decision-making. Similarly, Ayaz (mobile repair shop) in Nowshera, who used to earn 15-20 thousand a month, is now earning up to PKR 45,000, but importantly, all 3 of them indicate that they need further trainings on additional technical aspects that can bolster their capacities to further increase incomes.



b. Perception of Women on Accessing Financial Services

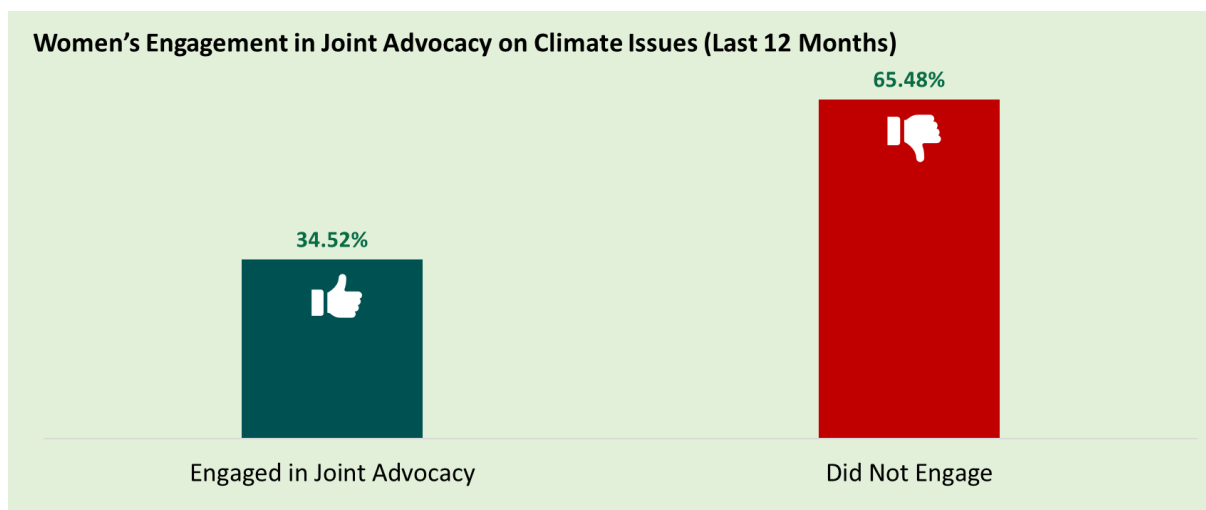
The perception of women on accessing financial services measures the Effectiveness of the financial inclusion pilots under Output 3. It gauges the success of linkages between female beneficiaries and financial institutions like the SRSP Village Banks to support climate-resilient investments.



A substantial 72% of women feel they are now successfully accessing financial services. This is a major milestone given the baseline value was 0 for structured financial inclusion mechanisms for these groups. The 28% who either do not access services or are unsure point to remaining hurdles. Qualitative data from Study 3 identifies lack of documentation and household resistance as the primary barriers.

c. Trained Women Engaged in Joint Advocacy with Local Leaders

This extent to which trained women engaged in joint advocacy is reflective assesses the Impact (OECD-DAC criterion) of leadership and negotiation training under Output 4. It looks for "signals of transformational change" by measuring how many women have moved beyond training to actively challenging or influencing local power structures regarding climate risks.

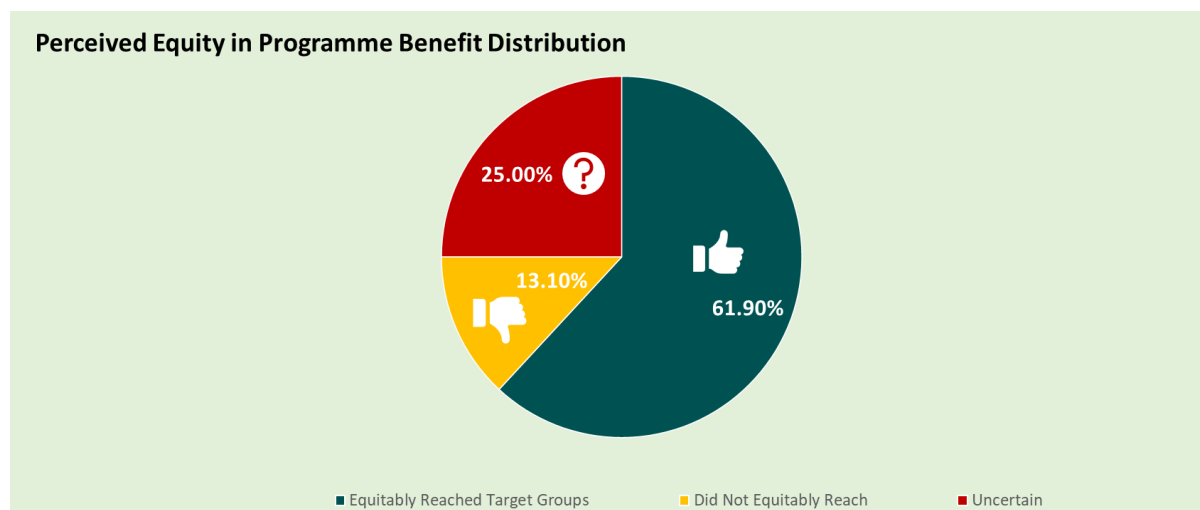


It was noted that around 35% of trained women have engaged in joint advocacy. This represents a significant shift from the baseline, where women had zero leadership roles and limited voice in community meetings. The fact that 65% have not engaged in advocacy reflects the findings that while women's confidence (Aitmad) has risen, executive decision-making roles (Chairperson/Secretary) in forums are still largely dominated by men. In addition, where it was related to the problems faced by women, they found it still challenging to travel or access government officers directly, except in few women with leadership traits. Despite these limitations, the programme has contributed to creating greater awareness among women regarding their rights, community issues, and the importance of participation in local decision-making processes. Community discussions and forum engagement have also gradually improved women's

visibility and confidence in public spaces, laying an important foundation for stronger participation and leadership over time.



d. Perception of Female Members on Equality of Programme Reach



While 62% of female members perceived the programme as equitable, the significant 25% "Don't know" response suggests that inclusion efforts were less visible or effectively communicated to the wider community. Qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) reveal several specific barriers that contributed to this lack of awareness and the remaining 13% negative perception.

The findings suggest that while early progress in building confidence and participation is evident, the transition to broader and more inclusive advocacy engagement remains constrained and is likely to evolve gradually. At the same time, it is neither expected nor necessary for all women to engage in advocacy roles which typically requires specific capacities, mobility, social acceptance, and access to decision-making spaces, which remain uneven due to persistent structural and socio-cultural constraints which are continued to be faced by majority. Transformational behavioural changes through approaches such as engage with men need significant time. Nevertheless, these advancements must evolve into meaningful and sustained influence. Such transformation requires time, particularly in geographically remote and socially complex regions, as meaningful social change is rarely a short-term process.

Although the programme reached 18,198 PWDs, their involvement was often limited to general participation rather than executive decision-making roles (except in Gudai, Astore, where PWD had prominent role). This phenomenon can be understood as natural and changes in society cannot be a zero and one situation, where such changes take natural time to integrate.

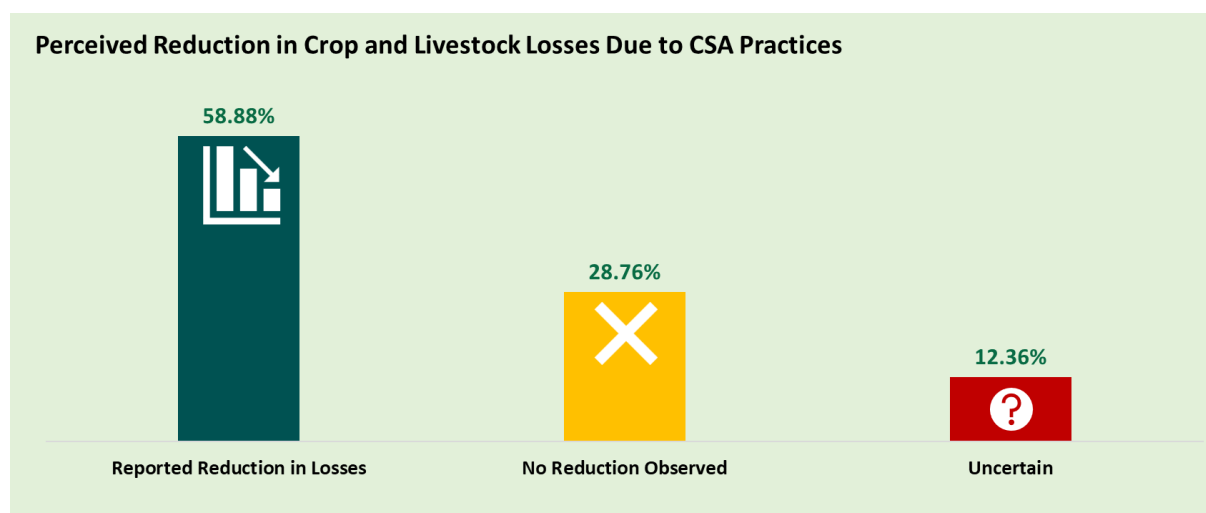
This can be understood from an example where a PWD in any given village was never invited to any social meeting or village level discussion. As an evaluator, I don't expect him or her to switch to a decision-making role in less than 2 years, for a PWD who has been neglected for 2-3 or up to 5-6 decades.

In highland districts like Astore and Ghizer, extreme weather conditions such as training sessions conducted at freezing temperature had limited the participation. . This physical isolation, combined with the digital divide (lack of electricity and internet), limit the effective participation of many women and marginalized individuals in remote valleys in leadership initiatives.

While a 21-month implementation timeframe may be adequate for the logistical delivery of physical infrastructure and resource distribution, it is fundamentally insufficient for catalyzing the deep-seated social and behavioral shifts required for genuine gender transformation. In geographically remote and culturally conservative regions of GB and KP, fostering natural maturity within community institutions and dismantling entrenched social norms necessitates an organically long-term, consistent commitment and process driven approach. Achieving a true shift from symbolic representation to substantive decision-making power for women requires an extended developmental arc that moves beyond pre-defined project activities toward a sustainable, long-term evolution of social agency.

e. Perceptions on Reduction of Crop /Livestock Loss Due to CSA Practices

The MTE also tried to measures the Effectiveness of Output 2 interventions by assessing the perceived reduction in asset losses (crops and livestock) following the adoption of modern agri practices. While relevance measures if a tool is right for the job, this analysis gauges if the tool actually performed its intended function: protecting livelihoods from climate shocks. This data directly supports the achievement of Output 2, which aims to empower at-risk households to adopt resilient livelihood pathways. The chart indicates that 59% of respondents experienced a reduction in losses to climatic challenges, while 29% did not, and 12% were unsure.



The baseline report documented that during the most recent flood prior to the project, 67% of households lost standing crops and 73% experienced damage to agricultural land, in 2022 floods. The fact that nearly 60% of respondents now report a reduction in such losses due to floods (2024 and 2025 flash floods and rains) indicates that BRAVE's "Anticipatory" and "Absorptive" capacity-building measures are working.

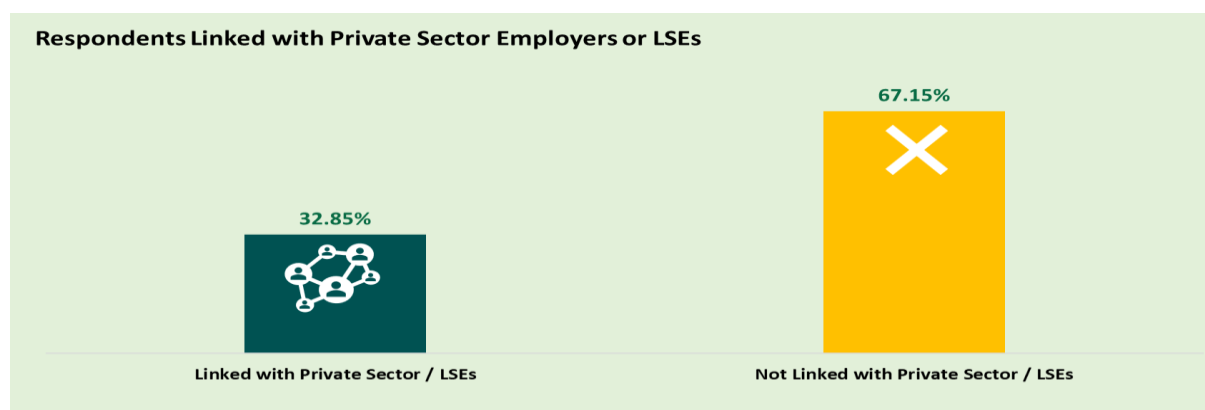
Tangible evidence of loss reduction is strongest in the KP districts. In Charsadda, despite a mid-season heatwave that damaged traditional crops, supported farmers saw tomato yields rise to 450 maunds per acre (compared to 300 maunds (11,190 kg) previously) through the use of climate-resilient ARI seeds. Similarly, in Nowshera, livestock FFS sessions led to an increase in chick survival rates from 10% to 80%, drastically reducing livestock mortality.

A major driver for use of hermetic seed storage (Hermetic drums) was that these prevented grain losses from rain and pests, allowing them to save seeds for the next season rather than buying expensive replacements. However, the farmers found it challenging to purchase it at a price and from a market in their access, undermining its sustainability beyond project life.

Additionally, qualitative field notes mention that the improved resilience of the irrigation channels also helped reduced losses to agriculture system in the years, where otherwise agri losses increased across GB, KP and other provinces. However, the task is not finished and many unprotected irrigation channels in the districts e.g. in areas like Gudai (District Astore) were still prone to being washed out by ‘high scale’ flash floods, surpassing the absorptive capacity of minor repairs.



f. Perception on Linkages with Private Sector Employers or LSEs through BRAVE Programme



This chart highlights the Effectiveness of Output 3, which aims to develop climate-sensitive private sector pathways for financing and employment. It shows the success rate of the programme in moving beyond skill acquisition to actual market integration, connecting graduates and farmers with employers or Local Social Enterprises (LSEs). The chart shows that 33% of respondents successfully established these linkages, while 67% did not.

At the start of the programme, the baseline value for this indicator was 0, as no structured private sector placement model existed for these vulnerable groups. Achieving a 33% linkage rate within the Phase I implementation window represents moderate institutional milestone.

The high percentage compared to baseline of successful linkages is strongly supported by the "premiumization" of value chains. In Charsadda, the programme successfully registered 80 bitter melon farmers for Global GAP certification through Bureau Veritas. This linkage allowed these smallholders to bypass exploitative local middlemen and export over 3,000 KGs of produce directly to Dubai. Similarly, in Nowshera, 100% of sampled tomato farmers were connected to formal contract buyers, securing a selling price increase of over 25%.

While these models demonstrate immense potential for scaling, driven by spillover effects, where non-project farmers are already approaching beneficiaries to purchase certified seeds, this venture is not yet accessible to everyone. While project-provided inputs including seeds, fertilisers, and nutrients have been well received by farmers, there are concerns around their long-term affordability. Many farmers may find it difficult to independently purchase these inputs on a sustained basis given their cost.

Furthermore, the technical complexity of maintaining Global GAP standards and the lack of critical post-harvest infrastructure (e.g., cold storage) prevent many subsistence farmers from entering these high-end markets independently.

Moving into Phase II, addressing these financial and structural barriers through market-based cost-sharing mechanisms and expanded storage facilities will be essential to ensure that more households can transition into these lucrative value chains. Moreover, to further expand market access and private sector engagement such as collective sales through Business Hubs, branded products through LSE partnerships, or export connections via IHT-style intermediaries, without requiring greater physical mobility than current social constraints allow so beneficiaries can convert skills and production gains into stable income opportunities.

A major driver for effectiveness was the formal agreement with the Model Farm Services Center (MFSC) in Charsadda, where 1,084 BRAVE-supported farmers were registered to ensure permanent access to government agricultural services and market inputs post-project. The Mid Term evaluation identifies clear reasons why one-third of participants were not linked:

- During FGD in Gudai, Makiyal (Astoria) and Gurunjar (Ghizer), many women in the focused group discussions noted they are trained in tailoring and embroidery but found out that due to high number of women trained, their local village markets were already saturated, with no one to sell to in nearby markets.
- As noted in the Nowshera Impact Assessment, while training was high quality, the lack of start-up capital and equipment for certain technical trades prevented some graduates from launching viable businesses that could be linked to broader markets.
- In highland districts (Astoria/Ghizer), digital skills graduates (freelancing) faced "internet and electricity barriers," making it difficult to maintain linkages with online private sector employers.

g. Indicator Tracking (Baseline Vs Endline)

Based on the logframe, baseline report, and Phase I completion documents, the following table summarizes the key performance indicators (KPIs) for the BRAVE programme, comparing their initial baseline values to the results achieved at the end of Phase I (June 2025).

BRAVE Programme: Key Indicators Baseline vs. Endline (Phase I)

Indicator Category	Key Indicator	Baseline Value (2024)	Endline/Achieved Value (Phase I - June 2025)	Data Source & Reference
Impact / Outcome	Outcome 1.1 (ICF KPI 4): Number/Percentage of people whose resilience has been improved.	37% (Baseline benchmark)	67% improvement in resilience (Target was 40%).	Nested Logframe; Completion Report.
Community Institutions	Output 1.1: Number of established and operational Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs/UCAFs).	0 functional CAFs existed.	428 Forums established (360 VCAFs and 68 UC/VC-CAFs).	Baseline Report; Completion Report.

Indicator Category	Key Indicator	Baseline Value (2024)	Endline/Achieved Value (Phase I - June 2025)	Data Source & Reference
Disaster Preparedness	Output 1.3: % of people able to take action upon receiving Early Warning (EW) 24 hours in advance.	36% of the population.	50% of total beneficiaries applied knowledge/action satisfactorily.	Baseline Report;.
Climate Smart Agriculture	Output 2.1: % of population practicing at least two Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices.	41% (informal/traditional adoption).	67% (Improved land preparation) and 69% (Line sowing) achieved.	Baseline Report;.
Livelihood Diversification	Output 2.2: % of population with diversified income generation sources.	5% of households.	61% respondents have diversified their livelihood that are less vulnerable to climate shocks.	Baseline Report
Transformational Change	Outcome 1.2 (ICF KPI 15): Number of forums demonstrating transformational change (Score 2+ on ODI scorecard).	0 forums.	50% of forums (approx. 210) confirmed transformational change.	Baseline data
Livelihoods (Off-farm)	Output 3.1: Number of persons [SADDD] benefitted with tools/skills for resilient pathways.	0 persons.	3,662 individuals benefitted from training and toolkits.	Completion Report;
Private Sector Linkages	Output 3.2: Number of persons acquisitioning jobs/placement with private sector (4-6 months).	0 persons.	1,803 individuals successfully placed.	Completion Report;
Institutional Capacity	Output 4.1: Number of district/provincial climate-resilient action plans developed and validated.	0 formal plans.	5 District level plans developed and rolled out.	Completion Report;
Infrastructure	Output 2.3: Number of schemes completed (Watershed/Irrigation/Flood mitigation).	0 project-supported schemes.	515 schemes completed (491 irrigation + 24 flood mitigation).	Completion Report; Activity Tracking Sheet.

h. Satisfaction of Stakeholders with BRAVE Programme

Stakeholder satisfaction with the BRAVE programme's Phase I interventions was high across all levels, with participatory field reviews confirming that 90% of respondents reported positive outcomes. Beneficiaries and government officials alike viewed the programme as a transformative model for climate resilience. Though, there was indeed demand from communities for further support under the BRAVE programme for their other unmet needs (rooted in climatic challenges), and were dismayed at the earlier departure of BRAVE Programme.

Key Elements Contributing to Stakeholder Satisfaction

- **Watershed and Irrigation Rehabilitation:** This was cited as a game-changer in Charsadda and GB. Communities were most satisfied by the drastic reduction in communal conflicts, which dropped from 85% of respondents experiencing weekly disputes to 76% never experiencing conflict post-intervention. Farmers were also satisfied by the significant time and labour savings; 92% of users now spend less than 5 hours daily on irrigation compared to the previous 5–15 hours, allowing them to focus on other productive tasks.
- **Climate-Smart Kitchen Gardening:** This component was a "huge success" for women, particularly in Nowshera where 98% reported improved household nutrition and 87% achieved monthly food

savings of up to PKR 5,000. Stakeholders were satisfied because it provided fresh vegetables during winter for the first time, enhancing food security for large households.

- Vocational Training and Economic Agency: Graduates were highly satisfied by the immediate income gains, such as mobile repair technicians tripling their monthly earnings. For women, satisfaction stemmed from increased confidence and household decision-making power; many reported they could now speak openly with officials and were consulted on household expenditures.
- Government Integration and adoption by Government projects: District governments were satisfied by the Knowledge Hubs, which broke taboos regarding visiting government offices and facilitated direct contact between farmers and officials. The Education Department in Chitral was so satisfied with the programme's CBDRM and retrofitting models that they began independently mimicking the initiatives in other schools.

Stakeholder Dissatisfaction and Key Drivers

- Late Delivery of Agricultural Inputs: In highland districts like Astore and Ghizer, stakeholders were dissatisfied by the delay in delivery of maize seeds in year one. This caused crops like maize to grow tall but not fully mature before the season ended, undermining the effectiveness of Output 2 in those regions.
- Training Duration and Post-Training market linkages gaps: Beneficiaries were less satisfied with the condensed training timelines compared to the needs of that particular trade (apart from some, where standard 3–6-month training was delivered, arguing they needed more time for skill mastery. Furthermore, the lack of startup capital and laptops for digital trainees as well as limited handholding in market access reduced their ability to translate skills into sustainable livelihoods immediately.
- Targeting and exit Communication: the winding down of BRAVE programme (Phase I) anxiety within beneficiaries, as residents felt they need more time to reach "natural maturity" or independent functionality, compared to the increased frequency and scale of climate change and associated disasters in GB and KP.

BRAVE Programme started at a time when we were struggling to understand what is happening to us and our people in 2022. Now that it showed the direction, BRAVE is closing without holding our hand to take us through the path. We don't have resources and climate change was not created by us.

Yawar Ali, UCAF President (Sher Qila)

3.3 Efficiency



The BRAVE programme utilized its GBP 8.28 million Phase I budget to achieve substantial scale, directly reaching 606,600 individuals and exceeding primary output targets despite a compressed implementation window. Resource management was governed by a Payment by Results (PbR) modality, which linked 30% of management fees to the successful achievement of quarterly milestones, providing a structured incentive for timely delivery. To maximize human resource efficiency, Concern Worldwide established a specialized Programme Management Unit (PMU) that integrated technical partners such as ADPC, HelpAge, and ODI,

ensuring that cross-cutting themes like Value for Money (VfM) and GESI were technically backstopped and embedded across the four implementation partners (AKF, CESVI, WHH, and Concern).⁴

The programme demonstrated high output-per-resource efficiency in establishing institutional and socio-economic assets. By the end of Phase I, BRAVE successfully formed 419 Climate Adaptation Forums (365 VCAFs and 54 UC/VC-CAFs), surpassing the initial target of 394. The programme's investment in Knowledge

⁴ BRAVE Phase I - Completion Progress Report, Programme Summary, Section 21; Document 1, BRAVE Program Description, Section 171-172; WHH Partner Progress Report.

Hubs and the training of 1,036 government officials served as a strategic efficiency measure, creating a "knowledge repository" that aligned project activities with provincial policies and prevented duplication of efforts. In Nowshera, this approach was so efficient that the district government independently allocated PKR 500,000 to sustain training activities, demonstrating how BRAVE leveraged its initial investment to secure external financial ownership.⁵

However, the efficiency of resource utilization, and timeline was constrained by harsh weather, short window for agriculture activities and the GLOF and flash floods in 2024 particularly in the high land areas. s. The Mid-Term Evaluation found that the programme's adopted planned phased implementation approach. The initial quarters primarily focused on community mobilization, establishment of VCAF/UCAF structures, and capacity building under Output 1, followed by the progressive rollout of livelihood, resilience, and adaptation interventions under Outputs 2, 3, and 4 from Q2 onwards. Programme documentation and KPI tracking further indicate that BRAVE achieved and, in several areas, exceeded planned targets. In areas affected by the 2024 floods, programme staff faced considerable additional burden alongside their regular responsibilities. BRAVE responded promptly, extending support to humanitarian efforts in the initial phase of the emergency response until dedicated staff were mobilised and onboarded in the highland areas. This reflects the programme's adaptability and commitment to communities during crisis situations.

To improve future efficiency, the programme successfully leveraged pre-existing community infrastructures, such as the AKDN network in Gilgit-Baltistan, which significantly reduced the time and cost associated with initial community mobilization. This "piggybacking" strategy allowed partners to move quickly into technical implementation, such as the rehabilitation of 515 watershed schemes that have already begun producing returns through a 25% to 50% increase in crop yields and a 92% reduction in the labor time required for irrigation. These gains suggest that where implementation was timely, the programme achieved strong Value for Money by translating financial inputs into high-performing, community-owned physical and social capital⁶. The majority of programme outputs and activities were delivered within the allocated budget and against agreed benchmarks, demonstrating strong Value for Money and reflecting the programme's overall commitment to efficient and accountable resource utilisation.

At the same time, the programme achieved efficiency gains by leveraging pre-existing community and institutional structures, such as the AKDN network in Gilgit-Baltistan. This reduced mobilization costs and accelerated implementation. As a result, interventions like the rehabilitation of 515 watershed schemes generated tangible returns, including 25–50% increases in crop yields and a 92% reduction in irrigation labor time. These outcomes demonstrate that where implementation was timely and inputs were functional, the programme achieved good Value for Money by converting financial resources into high-performing, community-owned assets. Overall, the programme reflects good efficiency with notable operational shortcomings, particularly related to timing and quality of inputs. Addressing these gaps will be critical to strengthening efficiency and VfM in Phase II.

3.4 Impact



The BRAVE programme has documented early signs of transformation potential across gender, socio-economic status, and physical ability, effectively shifting participants from "passive recipients of aid to active leaders in resilience-building." While the programme

⁵ BRAVE Phase I - Completion Progress Report, Section 178-180; Activity Summary Sheet, Section 186; KII Agri Director Nowshera, Section 465; KII Director Agriculture Chitral, Section 463].

⁶ Document 7, AKF Report, Section 191; Document 6, Activity Summary Sheet, Section 186; Irrigation Impact Study, Section 483, 523; CESVI Report, Section 297

successfully reached 606,600 direct beneficiaries, its impact manifested differently based on the specific vulnerabilities and social roles of the targeted groups.

a. Impact on Women vs. Men

The programme's contribution to women was primarily driven by economic empowerment and a notable increase in social agency. Through climate-smart kitchen gardening, 74,870 women improved household nutrition, with 78% respondents reporting better dietary diversity and 87% achieving food expense savings of up to PKR 5,000 monthly. Socially, women reported a improvement in confidence (*Aitmad*); for example, women in Pir Sabaq who were previously "silent" can now speak openly with officials and are consulted on household decisions regarding children's education and expenditures. In high-performing cases, such as a female beautician in Chaturkhand earning PKR 100,000 per month, this economic gain directly shifted household decision-making power.

Income Category	Women		Men	
	Women Before (%)	Women Current (%)	Men Before (%)	Men Current (%)
No Earnings	78%	28%	52%	8%
Low Income (< PKR 10,000)	14%	38%	17%	23%
Lower-Middle Income (10,001–20,000)	8%	20%	17%	24%
Middle Income (20,001–40,000)	0%	10%	0%	32%
Upper-Middle Income (40,001–60,000)	0%	3%	0%	10%
Higher Income (60,000+)	0%	1%	0%	3%

For men, the impact was concentrated on agricultural productivity and technical skill acquisition. Men primarily benefited from Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and crop improvement packages, which increased wheat yields from 30 (1,119 kg) to 54 maunds (2014 kg) per acre in lowland districts. Vocational training for men focused on technical trades like mobile repair and solar installation, where graduates in Nowshera tripled their monthly incomes from PKR 15,000 to PKR 45,000.

b. Impact on Economic Status (Landless and Extreme Poor)

The programme specifically targeted the landless and extreme poor through livelihood diversification to reduce dependence on climate-exposed daily wage labour. Vocational training for 3,662 individuals served as a pathway for landless households to secure non-agricultural income. In Charsadda, the "graduation model" placed 360 landless trainees in private sector jobs, providing "much-needed support and hope" to families who previously lacked any stable income. Overall, the intervention has resulted in 69% of employment or self-employed as compared to that of before the programme interventions that indicated 30% of employment or self-employed status.

c. Impact on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and Vulnerable Groups

BRAVE reached approximately 18,198 PWDs, utilizing the Washington Group Questions (WGQ) to identify and integrate them into community planning. The impact on PWDs was most visible in their symbolic and functional inclusion in Village Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs). For instance, Shamim Akhtar, a hearing-impaired member in UC Nisatta (District Charsadda), shared that being invited to meetings made her feel "seen and responsible" for her village's safety. Furthermore, the programme facilitated institutional linkages, helping Haider Ali in *Amirabad Ragir* village of District Charsadda access disability certificates and tri-cycles through the Social Welfare Department, which was previously a "taboo" or inaccessible process. Despite these gains, the Mid-Term Evaluation noted a continued gap in PWDs holding executive leadership roles within the forums, suggesting that while participation has improved, structural power shifts are still evolving.

d. Geographic Variance: Highland vs. Lowland

There is a documented geographic variance in impact between highland (Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral) and lowland (Charsadda and Nowshera) areas, driven by differences in infrastructure, market access, and

seasonal timing. While the programme achieved its overall resilience targets, the nature and depth of the benefits shifted significantly based on district-specific conditions. An important difference in impact was observed between geographic contexts. Lowland districts (Charsadda and Nowshera) benefited more rapidly from private sector linkages and high-yield agricultural inputs due to better market proximity and favourable seasonal timing. Conversely, Highland districts (GB and Chitral) faced "internet and electricity barriers" that hindered the success of digital skills training, such as freelancing. Additionally, while physical protection infrastructure like the large wall in *Golodas* village saved significant land in the highlands, the overall communication systems for early warning remain weaker in GB compared to the mosque-and-WhatsApp systems established in the plains.

The impact on geographies also varied in terms of limited window of agricultural productivity in summer in GBC, limited and often feeble access to major markets that are rendered inaccessible in times of monsoon, if flash floods wash away roads. Within that, comparing the benefits of highlands with lowlands will not be fair to the either of geographies.

Broadly, the MTE team saw that the under both livelihood related outputs, the incomes and productivity broadly increased however, it was observed that a bigger market helped higher number of skilled trainees in lowland areas while the smaller market and inaccessibility issues hindered it in highlands. On the other hand, under output 2, the increase in productivity in highlands helped provide vegetables in winter contributing to food security as well and also helped in marketing locally excess produce of wheat and other crops.

Differences in Impact: Highland vs. Lowland

- Vocational training in lowlands led to dramatic income gains, such as mobile repair technicians in Nowshera tripling their monthly earnings. In highland areas, however, digital skills training (freelancing) was largely ineffective due to frequent power outages, lack of laptops, and poor internet connectivity. Conversely, highland districts saw higher impacts from physical protection infrastructure, such as a large wall in Gulapur that saved significant agricultural land from erosion.
- In remote highland villages like Shukargah and Kushnath, the impact of kitchen gardening was transformative because it provided fresh vegetables during winter for the first time, significantly improving nutritional intake in areas previously cut off from markets. In the lowlands, the benefit was more focused on cost savings, with Nowshera households saving up to PKR 5,000 monthly on food expenses.

Why Some People Benefited More Than Others

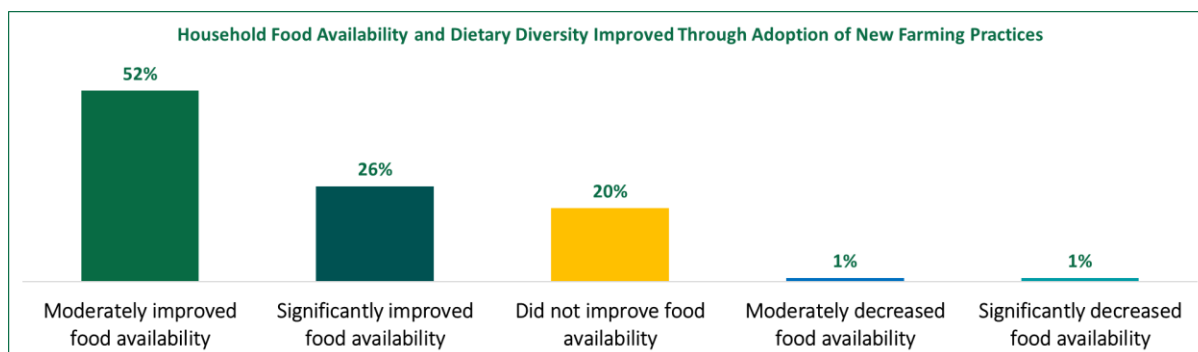
The evaluation identifies several reasons why benefits were distributed unevenly across districts:

- In the highlands, training and input delivery were often hampered by extreme weather. Trainees in Astore and Ghizer in extreme cool weather; which limited participation compared to the more accessible lowland sessions.
- Lowland farmers in Nowshera benefited from Global GAP certification and export linkages to international markets (UAE, KSA), which were not yet established for highland crops like saffron, leaving those farmers struggling with value chain development as the project ended.
- Some interventions were a poor match for highland climates. For example, Artificial Insemination (AI) for cattle succeeded in warmer lowland areas (18 out of 22 cases) but not as much successful in colder upper stretches like Gudai due to poor animal nutrition and extreme cold.
- In Gilgit-Baltistan, the programme leveraged the deep pre-existing network of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which allowed for faster community mobilization and CAF formation compared to the plains, where such structures had to be built from scratch.

e. Impact on Agricultural Activities

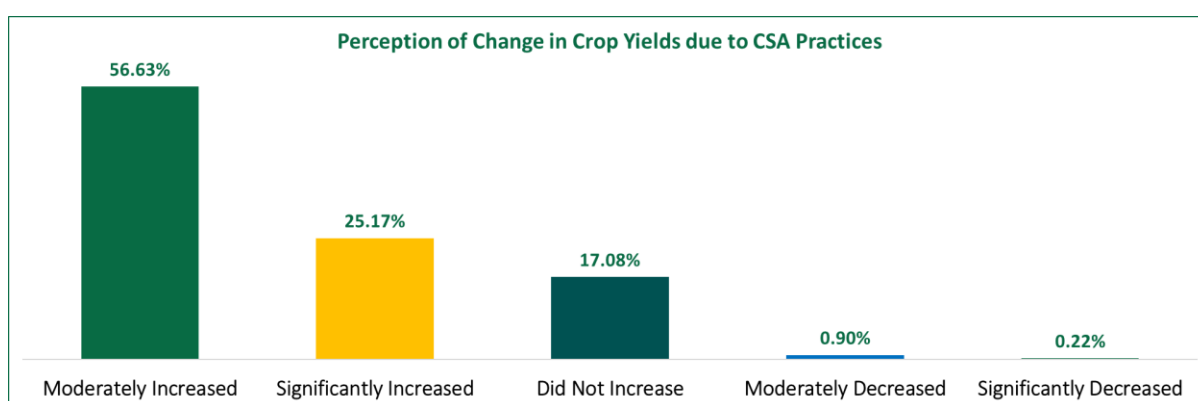
Regarding the impact on the availability of food and dietary diversity at household level, the distribution of responses indicates a predominantly positive perception: 52.36% of respondents report that household food availability or dietary diversity has moderately improved, while 26.29% report it has significantly

improved; together these two categories account for 78.65% of the sample. By contrast 19.78% say food availability did not improve, and a small minority (1.57%) report a moderate decrease; reports of a significant decrease are effectively negligible. From a measurement perspective, the modal response is moderate improvement, with a substantial and credible minority reporting large gains, a pattern consistent with short-term nutritional and production benefits that are visible to households but not yet universal.



Qualitative data support why respondents perceive these improvements. Interventions that combine kitchen gardening, composting, improved seed varieties and hermetic storage create immediate pathways to greater household food availability and dietary diversity: kitchen gardens supply fresh vegetables across seasons; composting improves soil fertility and vegetable yields; improved seeds increase staple output; and hermetic storage preserves seed and grain for household consumption. Field notes corroborate these linkages, with multiple FGDs reporting that kitchen gardens, ‘allowed them to have vegetables during the winter for the first time’ an outcome that directly raises dietary diversity and reduces market dependence during lean months.

The respondents’ perceptions on change in crop yields show a strongly positive signal: 56.63% report that crop yields have moderately increased and a further 25.17% report yields have significantly increased following adaption of CSA practices under BRAVE, together accounting for 81.80% of the sample who perceive yield gains. Only 17.08% indicate yields did not increase, while declines are negligible (0.90% moderately decreased; 0.22% significantly decreased). From a research standpoint, this distribution constitutes a robust self-reported outcome, the modal response is moderate improvement, with a substantial minority reporting large gains, consistent with short-term agronomic wins rather than isolated anecdotes.

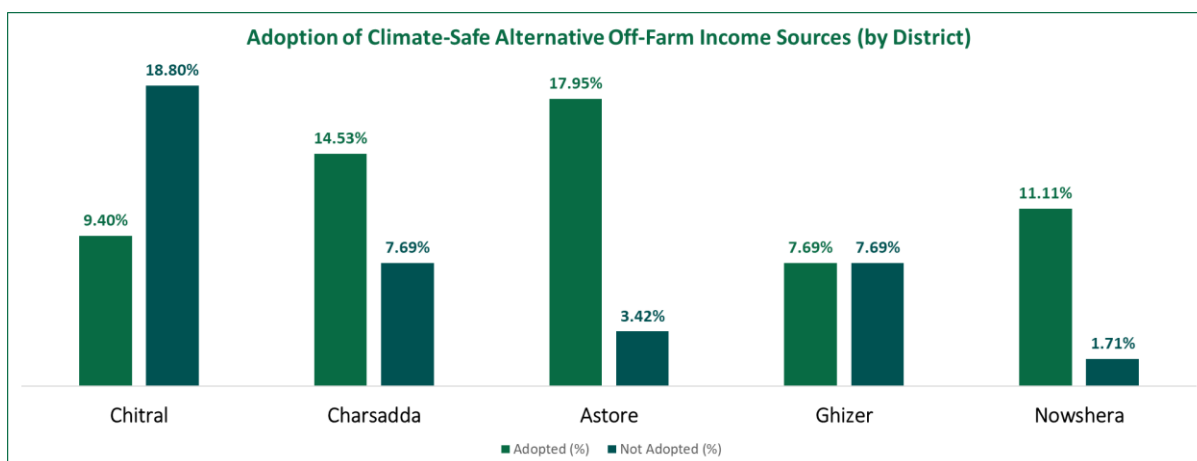


Qualitative evidence from FGDs, KIIs and field visits provides plausible mechanisms that explain these perceived yield improvements. CCRI-backed seed trials and hermetic storage were repeatedly cited as high-impact interventions; field notes state that special seed varieties, ‘nearly doubled the output for participating farmers, ‘and where Farmer Field Schools (FFS), timely input delivery and post-planting technical backstopping were present, farmers reported visible improvements in germination, pest control and crop survival. Conversely, the 17.08% reporting no increase often referenced implementation failures,

late seed delivery, one-off trainings without follow-up, or unsuitable varieties for micro-climates, highlighting that perceived impact is tightly coupled to the quality and timing of extension services and input logistics.

f. Impact on Livelihood Status

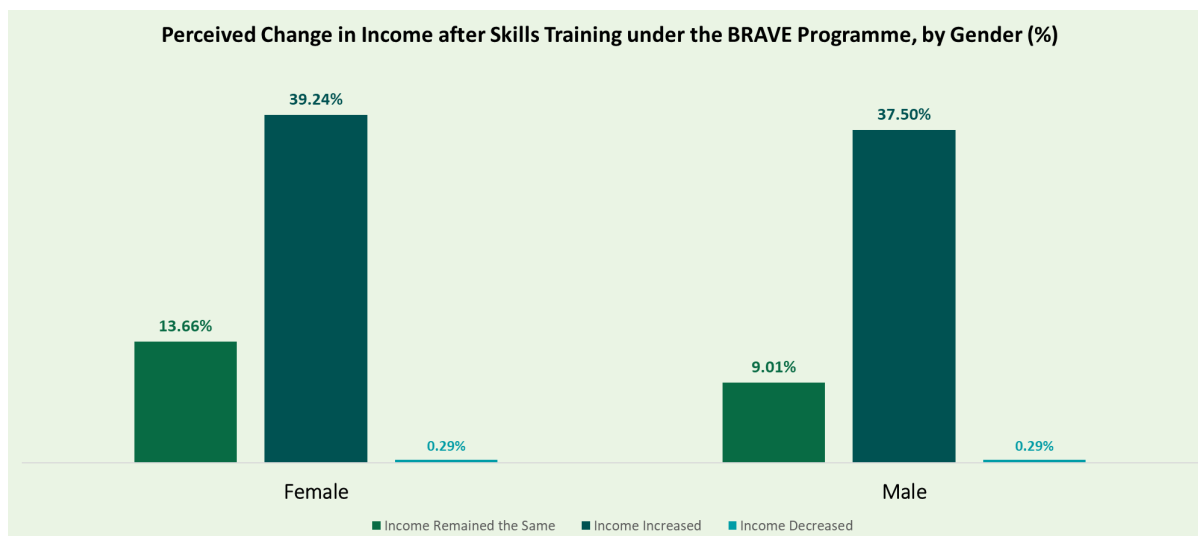
The findings show that 61% of respondents have adopted climate-safe alternative off-farm income sources across all 5 districts, indicating a moderate shift towards livelihood diversification under the BRAVE programme. This suggests that a fair majority of households (61%) are beginning to reduce reliance on climate-sensitive agriculture by engaging in alternative income activities as part of the increased awareness of climate change and impacts mitigation measures.



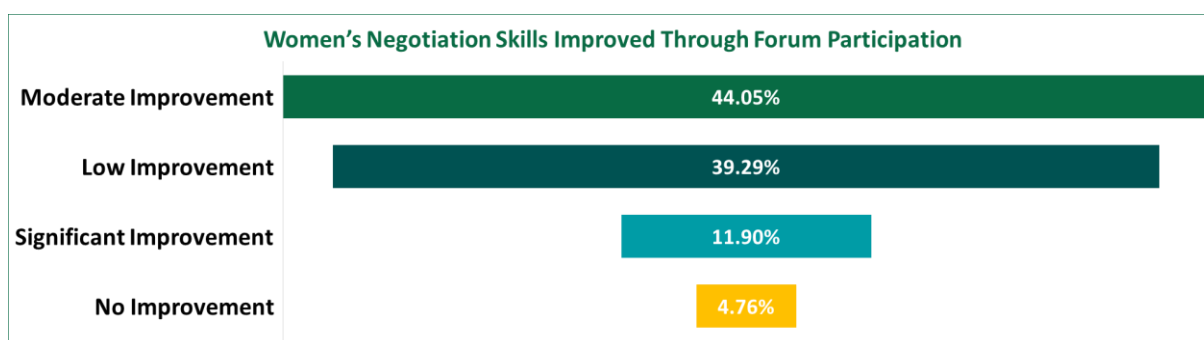
Qualitative evidence from FGDs and KIs supports this trend, highlighting positive outcomes from vocational and skills-based trainings (e.g., mobile repair, beautician services, and other trades), which in some cases led to increased and more stable incomes, thereby strengthening household resilience. However, a substantial proportion (39 %) has not adopted such alternatives, pointing to persistent barriers. Qualitative findings indicate that challenges such as limited access to tools, unreliable electricity and internet, market saturation in certain trades, and difficult terrain conditions, particularly in remote and cold regions, have slowed the adoption and continuity of off-farm livelihoods.

While discussing the perceived change in the income level of respondents after skills training programme, a substantial majority of both groups reported an increase in household economic status, with 39% of females and 37% of males affirming improvement. This indicates that the programme has been broadly effective in enhancing economic wellbeing across gender lines, with females showing a slightly higher rate of perceived improvement. Regarding those who reported that their economic status "Remained the same," 14% of females and 9% of males fell into this category, suggesting that a somewhat larger proportion of women experienced no change compared to men. Notably, only a very small fraction, 1% of females and 1% of males, reported a "Decreased" economic status, indicating that programme participation rarely led to negative economic outcomes.





g. Impact on Gender Transformation

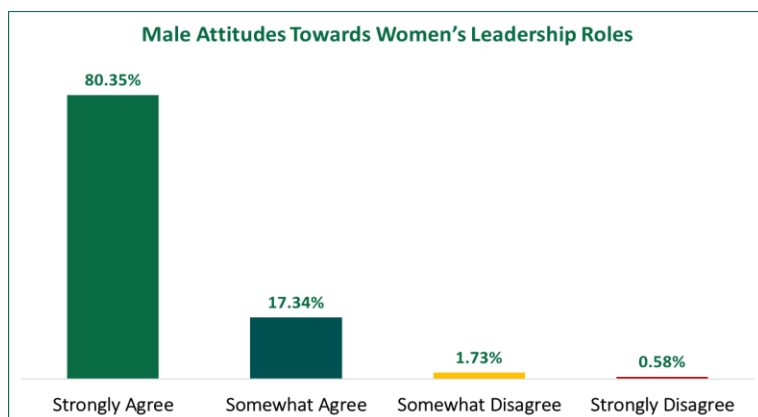


Survey findings indicate that while nearly all women report some improvement in negotiation skills, the depth and distribution of this change remain limited. Specifically, 44% report moderate improvement and 39% low improvement, with only 13% achieving significant gains. This distribution suggests that while the programme has successfully introduced women to new roles and spaces, it has not consistently enabled them to develop advanced competencies required for effective negotiation and leadership.

FGDs confirm that women who were previously hesitant to speak in public forums are now actively contributing ideas, engaging in discussions, and prioritizing community actions. Women participants reported that these trainings enhanced their ability to express their concerns, give them confidence to engage with local leaders, develop a better understanding of climate related challenge and advocate for climate-related priorities, such as water access, agriculture support, and disaster preparedness.

The shift in the support of male members towards females in having leadership roles has also progressing from a more rigid to inclusive manner. Among the respondents, 80% of male members strongly agreed in supporting women in leadership roles, and just 17% indicated that they somewhat agree to this perception.

Overall, the combined quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that the programme has made meaningful progress in creating enabling spaces for women's participation, voice, and engagement within communities. While substantial transformation in negotiation and leadership capacities may still require longer-term support and continued social norm change efforts, the evidence demonstrates important early signs of behavioural and attitudinal shifts among both women and male community members.



Qualitative data further confirm that while women are present in forums, their role remains largely consultative, with final decisions often shaped by male actors or external facilitators. The programme is highly relevant in shifting social norms and legitimizing women's public participation, but less effective in addressing structural barriers to leadership and decision-making authority.

h. Unintended and unexpected consequences (positive and/or negative) of BRAVE Programme

The BRAVE programme has generated several unintended and unexpected positive consequences, particularly in institutional adoption by government or others and also improved social cohesion. The physical rehabilitation of irrigation channels led to an unexpectedly sharp decline in communal water conflicts. The FGDs in District Charsadda suggests that, daily and weekly disputes dropped as structured water management systems and automated "nacca" (water gate) controls removed the primary triggers for theft and unfair distribution.

The rehabilitation and reconstruction of the irrigation water tank in *Gurenjer* village has catalysed a profound unintended positive transformation in the lives of local women by fundamentally altering their labor patterns. Prior to this intervention, chronic water scarcity and inefficient delivery systems forced women to perform farm irrigation during the night, a practice that imposed a severe physical burden and raised critical safety and security concerns. The improved water tank elevated the infrastructure to be flood-resilient and optimizing water storage capacity, the programme ensured consistent day-time water availability, effectively eliminating the necessity for hazardous nocturnal labor. This shift represents a significant socio-economic dividend that extends beyond simple agricultural productivity; it has drastically reduced the domestic workload on women while simultaneously enhancing their physical security and well-being.

At the grassroots level, the programme inspired the independent formation of "DEWA" in Gul Aman Ghari, a local organization where residents now contribute small funds to support widows and the poor without project facilitation, raising their own resources.

Socially, the programme catalysed a transformational shift in household decision-making power that exceeded initial training goals. As female vocational graduates began generating significant income, such as a beautician in Chaturkhand earning PKR 100,000 per month, they reported being consulted on major household expenditures and children's education for the first time. Another positive spillover was the emergence of "peer group influence" in non-project areas; farmers from neighbouring villages in Ghizer and Charsadda have approached BRAVE beneficiaries to purchase high-yield seeds and learn new planting methods after observing their superior results.

However, the programme also faced unexpected negative consequences related to dependencies on the project provided inputs. A primary concern identified by the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is input dependency, where farmers who saw yields increase have become reliant on expensive project-provided seeds, fertilizers and nutrients that they may not be able to afford independently next year, unless systematically linked to the market at a time when their agricultural yield enhances their carrying capacity to independently purchase, which does not happen in 1-2 seasons but needs multi-year approach.

In some villages, vocational trades faced market saturation, where in certain villages, so many women were trained in tailoring that they found it impossible to sell their services to one another, highlighting a lack of links to broader urban markets. While this could have been made a cooperative to collectively obtain orders from larger markets and to benefit individual female.

The programme has actively addressed these challenges through adaptive management and structural adjustments. To consolidate sustainability gains and allow community forums more time to reach natural maturity, a six-month extension was approved by FCDO to run until December 2025.

Similarly, to mitigate social resistance to female leadership, the BRAVE programme implemented "Engage with Men" training sessions, which have been credited with reducing patriarchal barriers and fostering male allyship in community decision-making spaces. Finally, to ensure the long-term viability of the Knowledge Hubs, the programme has begun formally institutionalizing these structures with district administrations, such as the Hub in Nowshera which is now officially notified by the ADC Relief.

3.5 Sustainability



The sustainability of the BRAVE programme's benefits is anchored in a strategic transition from project-led activities to institutionalised government and community ownership. A core achievement in this regard is the commitment from Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) to integrate the programme's Multi-Hazard Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (CCRVA) into formal District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs), ensuring that local climate adaptation planning becomes a permanent feature of district governance. In District Charsadda, the Tehsil-level Local Adaptation Plan of

Action (LAPA) is currently undergoing validation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and P&D Department to secure future budgetary allocations. Furthermore, the sustainability of technical training is evidenced in Nowshera, where the district agri-extension department independently requested and allocated PKR 500,000 for the hub activities and 500,000 for an exhibition of agri and kitchen gardening products for one time and they are planning to calendarize the event, and the Knowledge Hub was formally notified by the ADC Relief to serve as a permanent district-level think tank.⁷

At the community level, the independent functioning of 365 Village Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs) is critical to long-term success. To ensure these forums do not collapse post-funding, the programme is merging UC-level forums (UC-CAFs) with existing permanent structures such as Local Support Organisations (LSOs) and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). The Transformational Change Scorecard was applied to a sample of 49 forums (33 VCAFs and 16 UCAFs) to assess depth of change. The findings are indicative of trends within the assessed sample. Many forums have developed five-year Climate Action Plans (2023–2028), the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) highlighted a significant risk: the compressed implementation window meant some forums had insufficient time to reach "natural maturity" before the project phase out from the phase district, leading to community anxiety. Despite this, the physical rehabilitation of 515 watershed schemes provides a lasting benefit; for example, in Charsadda, the 76% reduction in communal water conflicts is maintained by community-led operation and maintenance committees that ensure equitable distribution without external intervention⁸.

The economic benefits of the programme demonstrate high potential for independent continuation due to strong market incentives. The findings from the FGDs suggest that the farmers who adopted certified wheat seeds saw yields stabilize at 40–60 maunds (1492–2238 kg) per acre, creating a financial incentive that has led many to store seeds in project-provided hermetic drums for future seasons rather than reverting to low-yield traditional varieties. In the private sector, the Model Farm Services Center (MFSC) in Charsadda has

⁷ BRAVE Phase I -Completion Progress Report; CESVI Progress Report Report; and FGDs with multiple communities and KIs with stakeholders,).

⁸ AKF Report; FGDs and KIs; Irrigation Impact Study

signed formal agreements to provide 1,084 BRAVE-supported farmers with continued access to technical support and quality inputs beyond the project's lifespan.

The evaluation found that many farmers have become reliant on expensive project-provided fertilizers and nutrients, raising concerns that the most vulnerable may struggle to maintain high productivity once financial support ends. Additionally, while vocational trainees in technical trades like mobile repair have seen income triples, those in "soft" trades like tailoring face market saturation within their villages, requiring further links to urban markets to remain viable. To address these gaps, the FCDO approved a six-month extension through December 2025, specifically to strengthen forum governance and reinforce the linkages between Business Hubs and micro-finance institutions like the SRSP Village Banks.

a. Independent Functionality and Sustainability of climate adaptation forums and Hubs

The Climate Adaptation Forums (VCAFs and UC-CAFs) have begun to demonstrate functional independence through localized resource mobilization and proactive disaster management. A landmark example is VCAF Kochdeh (Astora), which independently mobilized PKR 1.4 million from local and diaspora sources to upgrade critical water infrastructure, including a powerhouse chamber and pipeline. In Nowshera and Charsadda, forums have institutionalized early warning systems using mosque announcements and WhatsApp groups, moving belongings and livestock to safety hours before floodwaters arrive without waiting for project staff [673, CH].

The Knowledge and Business Hubs are functioning as consultative think tanks that bridge the gap between academic research and government policy. In Nowshera, the Knowledge Hub has reached a level of independent recognition where district authorities formally proposed its replication to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa e.g. in Nowshera, where knowledge hub has been notified by district government however its frequency of meeting has been reduced to quarterly meetings, instead of monthly meetings however it will still provide a platform for local farming community to access for the challenges they face. Similarly, the Chitral Knowledge Hub has become a permanent public repository for agricultural objectives, ensuring project activities align with provincial aims. Overall, the knowledge hubs and business hubs in all five districts are officially notified from their respective district governments.

The likelihood of VCAFS and UCAFs continuing after BRAVE support ends, is high for institutionalized bodies but remains vulnerable for those forums that have not reached natural maturity. Sustainability is further strongly supported by the commitment of Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) to integrate the forums' Multi-Hazard Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (CCRVA), Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) into formal, District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs). In Chitral, the DDMU has already expressed readiness to take ownership of the forum contact details and utilize them for future disaster response. To prevent collapse, the programme is strategically merging UC-CAFs in some cases, with existing permanent structures such as Local Support Organisations (LSOs) and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs).

Similarly, knowledge Hubs are hosted by permanent institutions like Karakoram International University and Bacha Khan University, which ensures their continued role as research repositories. In the private sector, agreements with Model Farm Services Centers (MFSCs) ensure that over 1,000 farmers will continue to receive technical support and inputs beyond the project's lifespan.

Despite these positive signals, several factors explain why some forums may struggle.

1. **Input and Financial Dependency:** Many agricultural gains are currently tied to expensive project-provided fertilizers and nutrients, raising concerns that the extreme poor may not afford to maintain high yields independently [656, CH]. These gains indicate meaningful progress, they should be interpreted as early, supported outcomes rather than fully sustained resilience, as continued reliance on project-provided inputs may limit the ability of the most vulnerable households to maintain these improvements independently.

2. **Lack of Service Models:** While Business Hubs are registered with Chambers of Commerce, they currently lack clear service models or independent funding to survive without project-led facilitation.
3. **Market Gaps:** Some vocational trades, like tailoring, have faced village-level market saturation, meaning graduates require further links to broader urban markets to remain economically viable [676, CH].

To mitigate these risks, a six-month extension through December 2025 was approved to focus specifically on governance, resource mobilization, and reinforcing formal institutional linkages

3.6 Coordination and Coherence



The BRAVE programme achieved extensive and institutionalised coordination with Government line departments, moving beyond ad-hoc collaboration to formalised strategic partnerships. From the design phase, the programme was anchored in the Project Steering Committee (PSC), convened with the Planning and Development (P&DD) Departments in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which included representatives from agriculture, forestry, and disaster management to ensure strategic alignment. This was further bolstered by the formation of Knowledge Hubs, which served as consultative platforms

where line departments and technical experts collaboratively defined project objectives and research priorities. A landmark cooperative agreement with the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) enabled the dissemination of localized climate risk information through tools like the *Kisaan App*.

This deep level of cooperation has directly resulted in better programming by integrating community-driven data into formal government plans. All Village Council and Union Council Climate Adaptation Plans (CAPs) and Multi-Hazard Risk Assessments (CCRVAAs) were validated and formally endorsed by district and provincial authorities. In District Charsadda, the Tehsil-level Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) was developed through participatory insights and is currently being validated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to secure resource-backed actions. Furthermore, coordination with the Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department ensured that climate-resilient wheat varieties provided to farmers were technically validated, making Charsadda a "model for seed self-sufficiency".

The effectiveness of this cooperation is evidenced by institutional mimicry and the formal adoption of BRAVE's models by state entities. In Nowshera, the Knowledge Hub's success was so pronounced that district authorities formally proposed its replication across the province to the Chief Minister of KP, and the district government independently allocated PKR 500,000 to sustain training activities. Additionally, 1,084 BRAVE farmers were registered with Model Farm Services (MFSC) in Charsadda through a formal agreement, securing their permanent access to government subsidies and technical inputs.

Despite these successes, the evaluation identified areas where coordination requires further strengthening for Phase II. Government officials highlighted that while community training was robust, there is a critical need for dedicated capacity building of government civil servants to ensure they have the technical skills to manage these initiatives long-term. Finally, while 1,036 officials were trained, participants emphasized that Knowledge and Business Hubs must evolve into even more inclusive forums that consistently integrate community voices alongside technical experts.

a. Consistency within consortium model between members across its implementation modalities (harmonization of quality, quantity, targeting criteria, technical approaches etc.)

The BRAVE programme's consortium model achieved a high degree of structural and strategic consistency, anchored by a centralized Programme Management Unit (PMU) and specialized Technical Working Groups (TWGs) for DRR, Livelihoods, GESI, and MEAL. These structures ensured that the four partners, Concern, AKF, CESVI, and WHH, adhered to a unified Theory of Change and followed standardized indicators, such

as the target of improving community resilience by 40%⁹. Quantitative tracking confirms that all partners delivered against the same four resilience outputs, resulting in the establishment of 360 VCAFs and 68 UC-CAFs across all five districts, which exceeded the initial Phase I target¹⁰. This uniformity allowed for the meaningful comparative analysis between highland and lowland regions required by the evaluation¹¹.

Harmonization of technical approaches was a core strength, facilitated by technical partners like HelpAge, ODI Global and ADPC, who provided centralized training on inclusive climate adaptation. All consortium members utilized the same Community-Based Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CCRVA) methodology to develop Village Climate Action Plans (CAPs), ensuring a consistent level of data-driven planning across Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa¹². Moreover, at some places, it was noted that CAPs have been developed by other programmes as well such as WRAP WWF which could possibly undermine value for money and efforts. In the livelihoods sector, the graduation model was applied consistently, leading to vocational training for 3,662 individuals and the placement of 1,803 trainees in private sector internships¹³. Qualitative evidence from the Lessons Learnt Workshop (June 2025) further suggests that internal coordination meetings effectively disseminated successful pilots, such as the registration of farmers with Model Farm Services (MFSC)¹⁴.

There was also a notable disparity was noted in Nowshera, where trainees in computer courses were not provided with laptops, while those in other trades received full toolkits, limiting the immediate livelihood potential for digital graduates¹⁵.

Logistical coordination also struggled with agro-climatic synchronization across the consortium. The late delivery of seeds in highland districts (June instead of April), which meant maize crops grew tall but not fully matured to produce grain¹⁶. This stood in sharp contrast to the lowland districts where timely delivery resulted in yields increasing to 54 maunds (2014 kg) per acre. [KII Director Agri Tarnab, Section 611; Document 4, Section 40]. These findings suggest that while the consortium model achieved strong policy and structural alignment, its field-level consistency was occasionally undermined by targeting models and not adapting centralized logistical systems to localized geographic realities.¹⁷ Moreover, each INGO as consortium partner have used their own policies for procurement and logistics and this may result in such challenges in synchronization especially in procurement logistics.

3.7 Programme Design and Conceptual Coherence



The BRAVE Programme demonstrates strong conceptual coherence in its Theory of Change. The integration of anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive capacities (the '3As' framework) into a single programme architecture is well-aligned with the international evidence base on climate resilience building. The programme's structure, linking community institutions (Output 1) to livelihoods (Output 2), private sector (Output 3), and government systems (Output 4), reflects a systems-informed approach that seeks to address structural drivers of vulnerability rather than merely providing technical inputs. In addition, the BRAVE Theory of Change (ToC) demonstrates high quality by conceptualizing resilience as a systems-informed, multi-level architecture rather than a set of isolated technical tasks. Its strategic centering of women and marginalized groups successfully built genuine local agency and leadership, effectively addressing the structurally diverse vulnerabilities of at-risk populations. Foundational assumptions regarding sustained government buy-in proved remarkably accurate, resulting in the landmark success of institutionalising community-led adaptation plans into formal state policy. Furthermore, the model correctly presumed that communities would be receptive to inclusive governance structures, enabling

9 [Document 1, Section 188; Document 5, Section 171; Document 4, Section 22]

10 Document 9, Section 220; Document 4, Section 29]

11 [Document 1, Section 186; Inception Report, Section 181]

12 Document 4, Section 24; Document 8, Section 214; Document 1, Section 176]

13 Document 4, Section 32; Document 6, Section 207]

14 [Document 7, Section 132; Document 8, Section 217; Document 10, Section 226]

15 [BRAVE Nowshera Impact Assessment Report, Section 156]

16 [Document 7, Section 141; FGDs and KIIs, Section 551]

17 [Document 8, Sections 394, 395; FGDs and KIIs, Section 551]

them to transition from passive recipients to active resilience leaders. Finally, the ToC validates the core premise that resilience can only be achieved by addressing vulnerabilities simultaneously at the household, community, and institutional levels to effectively disrupt the cycle of climate-induced poverty

The programme's explicit commitment to gender equality and social inclusion, embedded across all outputs rather than treated as a standalone component, is a notable design strength. The commitment to Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) collection from the outset provides the evaluative infrastructure necessary to assess differential impacts.

Based on the evaluation findings and lessons learned during Phase I, the following key areas have been identified as needing critical improvement in terms of design, approaches, and implementation to maximize climate resilience in Phase II:

a. Strategic Design and Planning Frameworks

- The evaluation noted that the implementation window (approximately 1.5 years of active delivery) and an extension of 6 months gave Village and Union Council Climate Adaptation Forums (V/UCAFs) slightly less time to reach natural maturity or become fully independent entities before the project began winding down¹⁸.
- Project designs must factor in more appropriate time and resources for interventions that require medium-to-long-term engagement, particularly those aiming for shifts in agricultural practices and social behaviours.
- Overall, it is worth mentioning that the process of the BRAVE programme is evolutionary rather than transformational and it would take time for a complete transformation having the current geography, culture, and socio-economic conditions.

b. Targeting and Inclusive Approaches

- The evaluation found that in some areas, particularly Charsadda, beneficiary targets were allocated evenly across villages and Union Councils. However, intervention-specific vulnerability criteria were thoughtfully adapted to ensure that project inputs reached the most deserving and marginalised communities, reflecting the programme's commitment to targeted and equitable delivery. For Phase II, it is recommended to adopt a data-driven, needs-based approach, using vulnerability assessments to guide more targeted and efficient resource allocation.¹⁹
- While Knowledge and Business Hubs were successful, they faced a gap in community representation; moving forward, these Hubs must evolve into inclusive multi-stakeholder forums that consistently integrate community voices alongside technical experts.²⁰
- Despite achieving 40% participation, a slight gap remains in women holding executive decision-making roles within the VCAFs and UCAFs, which requires more targeted leadership support and coaching to the nascent women leadership²¹.

c. Implementation Logistics and Technical Quality

- In highland districts such as Ghizer and Astore, seasonal considerations proved critical to intervention outcomes. In some instances, seed delivery occurred later than the optimal planting window, which given the shorter growing seasons in these areas, affected the ability of crops to complete their full growth cycle. Going forward, closer alignment between procurement timelines and district-specific cropping calendars will be important to ensure that communities in highland areas are able to fully benefit from project inputs and realise the intended impact.
- There is a risk of input dependency, where farmers who saw yield increases have become reliant on expensive project-provided fertilizers that they may not be able to afford independently once financial support ends.

18 FGDs and KIIs

19 CESVI Report, Section 383; Copy of CESVI Report, Section 501; FGDs and KIIs, Section 561].

20 CESVI Report, Section 379; Copy of CESVI Report, Section 497].

21 KII with various stakeholders

- Enhancing Vocational Training Standards: Vocational courses were often condensed (1–2.5 months) compared to standard 3–6-month government courses, leading to calls for extended training durations to ensure skill mastery and thrived employment outcomes²². As, respondents have recorded increased employment status and monthly income but in parallel they demand for additional trainings to thrive their business and strengthen their skills.

d. Infrastructure and Communication Systems

- It is recommended that the programme build on the advantages and benefits expand Nature-Based Solutions such as agroforestry and rainwater harvesting to enhance biodiversity and long-term water security.
- Weak infrastructure, limited internet and limited number of smart phones and lack of stable electricity source in valleys or villages often impeded adoption of EWS, becoming part of WhatsApp group of PMD etc to get early warnings. It is suggested to consider this contextual limitation while planning with the government departments e.g. PMD to provide an ecosystem of early warnings.
- Market Linkages for Value Chains: Vocational trades like tailoring are facing market saturation at the village level; Phase II must prioritize establishing links to broader urban markets to ensure these livelihoods are economically sustainable [FGDs and KIIs, Section 567; Section 582].

e. Institutional Integration and Sustainability

- Sustainability is hindered by the lack of technical skills among government civil servants to manage these initiatives long-term; future budgets should specifically include components for the capacity building of line department staff.
- Financial Sustainability for Hubs: Dedicated budgetary support and independent service models are needed to ensure Knowledge and Business Hubs can function without direct project-led facilitation²³.

²² Post Distribution Monitoring Report, Section 682; AKF Report, Section 142]

²³ CESVI Report, Section 379; BRAVE Phase I - Completion Report, Section 82]

4. Conclusions and Recommendations



The following presents the key conclusions and recommendations derived from the analysis and findings. These are structured both by OECD-DAC criteria and by programme outputs.

A. Conclusions and Recommendations by OECD-DAC Criteria

1. Relevance

a. CSA Practices

Key Conclusions

1. The programme achieved strong relevance (76% suitability) by grounding its interventions in localized evidence, participatory Climate Action Plans (CAPs), and technical validation through Knowledge Hubs, ensuring that Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices were aligned with district-specific vulnerabilities and agro-ecological conditions.
2. The adoption of the “3As” framework (Anticipatory, Absorptive, and Adaptive capacities) proved highly relevant in addressing Pakistan’s dual climate risk profile, effectively targeting flood-prone lowlands and glacial and climatic risks in highland regions through context-specific resilience planning.
3. The programme successfully bridged national climate policy frameworks with community-level priorities by translating risk assessments into actionable CAPs, thereby ensuring that interventions were not only technically sound but also socially owned and locally endorsed.
4. While, the programme demonstrated strong overall relevance, there is room to further strengthen contextual alignment across diverse geographies. In some areas, particularly highland districts where seasonal windows are short and climate-sensitive, logistical delays in input delivery posed challenges to timely implementation
5. In some cases, the introduction of improved inputs has high results on the production but on the other hand increased dependency on external resources (e.g., fertilizers and seeds), raising concerns regarding long-term relevance for resource-constrained households.

Key Recommendations

1. Develop Regionalized Implementation Calendars: The programme must establish district-specific procurement, logistics, and delivery schedules to ensure that agricultural inputs reach highland areas within the optimal planting window (in most cases April), thereby maintaining contextual relevance.
2. While a large proportion of households reported receiving early warnings including the PMD alerts, reliance remains predominantly on informal communication channels. Future interventions should further advocating and institutionalizing state-led early warning systems coordinated through District Disaster Management Units (DDMUs) and the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).
3. Scale Proven CSA Interventions: Further assess and strengthen the adoptability and contextual suitability of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) interventions, including hermetic storage, certified seeds, and efficient irrigation systems, before considering wider replication and scale-up across additional communities.
4. Promote Financially Sustainable Practices: Introduce cost-sharing and market-based mechanisms to reduce dependency on externally provided inputs and enhance long-term viability for smallholder farmers.

5. To ensure resilience building efforts are grounded in local realities, MH-CCRVA data and Village/UC/District Climate Action Plans (CAPs), should be integrated into the district and provincial level Annual Development Plans (ADPs), enabling CAPs to function as dynamic, government-backed tools for planning and resource mobilization rather than static documents.

b. Skills Development & Livelihoods

Key Conclusions

1. The programme demonstrated exceptional relevance (97% alignment with market demand) by successfully transitioning beneficiaries from climate-vulnerable daily wage labour into diversified and market-relevant technical and service-based occupations.
2. Vocational training interventions effectively responded to local economic gaps, resulting in measurable improvements in employability (25% to 42%) and income generation, particularly in trades such as mobile repair, electrical work, and agriculture-related services.
3. The programme contributed significantly to livelihood diversification in communities where baseline dependence on single income sources was high, thereby strengthening household resilience to climate shocks.
4. However, relevance varied significantly by geography, as digital and service-oriented skills in highland areas remained underutilized due to structural constraints such as lack of electricity, internet connectivity, and access to markets.
5. In some cases, oversupply in certain trades (e.g., tailoring and embroidery) led to localized market saturation, limiting the income potential of trained beneficiaries.

Key Recommendations

1. Integrate Hardware with Skills Training: Digital skills programmes must include provision of laptops, solar-powered energy solutions, and internet connectivity to ensure practical application in remote areas.
2. Strengthen Market Linkages: Further expand and establish structured connections between rural producers and urban markets to ensure that skills translate into sustainable income opportunities.
3. Extend Training Duration: Align vocational training programmes with national standards (3–6 months) to enhance technical proficiency and competitiveness.
4. Promote Market-Driven Trade Selection: Conduct periodic market assessments to avoid saturation in certain trades and ensure alignment with evolving economic opportunities.

2. Effectiveness

a. CSA & Loss Reduction

Key Conclusions

1. The programme demonstrated strong effectiveness, with approximately 59% of households reporting reduced crop and livestock losses, particularly in lowland districts and in interventions such as improved seeds, irrigation systems, and hermetic storage technologies.
2. These outcomes indicate that the programme successfully enhanced anticipatory and absorptive capacities, enabling households to better withstand climate-related shocks and reduce livelihood losses.
3. However, nearly 28% of households did not experience significant loss reduction, primarily due to climatic mismatches, and the absence of complementary protective infrastructure in high-risk areas.
4. Future interventions should further expand on scalable Nature-Based Solutions such as watershed management, riverbank stabilization, and afforestation, ensuring that resilience measures are effective against both seasonal variability and large-scale climatic shocks.

5. The findings suggest that while CSA practices are effective under normal conditions, they are insufficient to mitigate large-scale climatic shocks (e.g., flash floods) without integration with physical infrastructure and ecosystem-based protection measures.

Key Recommendations

1. Ensure Climate-Synchronized Input Delivery: Agricultural inputs must be distributed in alignment with local seasonal cycles to maximize effectiveness, particularly in high-altitude regions.
2. Integrate Structural and Nature-Based Solutions: Combine CSA interventions with watershed management, flood protection infrastructure, and nature-based solutions (e.g., afforestation, riverbank stabilization) to enhance resilience.

b. Private Sector Linkages & Livelihoods

Key Conclusions

1. The programme achieved notable effectiveness (57% successful private sector linkages) in connecting beneficiaries to employment opportunities, value chains, and formal markets.
2. It successfully enabled the transition of smallholder farmers into commercial and, in some cases, export-oriented value chains, enhancing income stability and economic resilience.
3. However, effectiveness was uneven across sectors; while agriculture and technical trades performed strongly, vocational trades such as tailoring and digital freelancing faced constraints due to limited demand, lack of capital, and infrastructure gaps.
4. A notable proportion of trained individuals, particularly those in self-employment-oriented trades, were unable to fully utilize their skills due to limited start-up resources, lack of essential tools/equipment, , as reported during KIIs and FGDs. This was especially evident among digital skills, tailoring, embroidery, and small enterprise trainees, where income generation depended on access to capital, equipment, and market linkages

Key Recommendations

1. Introduce Business-Ready Support Packages: Provide start-up capital, toolkits, and incubation support to ensure immediate operationalization of skills.
2. Introduce a structured post-intervention support phase to ensure that newly established livelihood activities and businesses are nurtured beyond the training period, allowing beneficiaries to consolidate gains and withstand early-stage economic and climatic risks.
3. Knowledge Hubs should be endorsed at provincial level and institutionalized to work as independent, district-level knowledge repositories hosted within government extension systems or academic institutions, building on successful models observed in districts such as Nowshera and Karakoram International University (KIU).
4. Establish Collective Marketing Platforms: Facilitate producer groups and cooperatives to link rural products with larger urban and international markets.

3. Efficiency

Key Conclusions

1. The programme demonstrated strong efficiency by achieving or exceeding most targets, including the establishment of 419 forums and reaching 606,600 direct beneficiaries within the allocated GBP 8.28 million budget.
2. Efficiency was enhanced through strategic partnerships, integration of Knowledge Hubs, and engagement with government systems, which reduced duplication and improved coordination.
3. Implementation efficiency was inevitably influenced by factors largely beyond the programme's control. The seasonality of agricultural activities, limited construction windows in highland areas, and the significant disruption caused by the 2024 flood emergencies collectively placed considerable pressure on both communities and project staff. These compounding challenges contributed to some delays in input delivery and reduced the time available for adequate follow-

up. Given the complex operating environment, the programme's ability to maintain delivery under such circumstances reflect the resilience and commitment of its teams on the ground.

Key Recommendations

1. Strengthen the timeliness and context-specific delivery of interventions, especially in geographically challenging and climate-sensitive areas.
2. Ensure that implementation sequencing is aligned with seasonal and geographical realities, particularly in highland regions, so that procurement, delivery, and utilization of inputs occur within optimal timeframes and reduce inefficiencies associated with delayed execution.
3. Continue with Data-Driven Targeting: Allocate resources based on population size and vulnerability rather than uniform distribution across areas.

4. Impact

Key Conclusions

1. The evaluation observed notable socio-economic changes during the programme period. For example, the proportion of households reporting no income declined from 65% the start to 16.6% at mid-term, alongside reported improvements in nutrition, income, and resilience capacities. While these trends are significant, they are interpreted through a contribution lens, recognizing that multiple external factors may also have influenced these outcomes.
2. Evidence from KIIs and FGDs suggests catalytic and spillover effects, including instances of government institutions adopting programme approaches and neighboring communities replicating certain practices. These findings indicate a plausible contribution of the programme to wider systemic change.
3. A substantial reduction (76%) in reported water-related conflicts was observed in areas where irrigation and water management interventions were implemented. While this aligns with programme activities, it is presented as an associated outcome, with the programme likely contributing alongside other contextual factors.
4. The extent of observed changes varied across regions, with highland areas showing comparatively limited benefits, likely due to structural, climatic, and market constraints, highlighting the importance of context-specific implementation

Key Recommendations

1. Scale Promising Interventions: Consider expanding interventions such as irrigation, kitchen gardening, and CSA practices to additional areas, as evaluation findings indicate positive outcomes where these were effectively implemented.
2. Address Structural Barriers/Constraints: Strengthen infrastructure, market access, and connectivity in highland regions to enable more equitable outcomes, as contextual limitations were observed to influence the extent of benefits across districts.

5. Sustainability

Key Conclusions

1. Government engagement and integration of programme models into local systems indicate strong potential for long-term continuity.
2. However, strong foundations have been laid, some areas require further attention to secure long-term sustainability. Financial and operational models for Business and Knowledge Hubs are still developing, and community linkages to regional and national markets remain limited, which may affect sustained income generation over time. Additionally, Climate Adaptation Plans have yet to be fully integrated into Annual Development Plans (ADPs) at provincial and district levels, which will be important for ensuring institutional continuity and government ownership beyond the programme's lifecycle.

Key Recommendations

1. Transition to Market-Based Approaches: Promoting market-based models, particularly in areas where farmers have already demonstrated benefits and capacity to invest. For new intervention areas, introduce a phased approach that combines initial support with early market linkages to ensure sustainable uptake from the outset
2. Institutionalize CAPs: Continuous advocacy to integrate Climate Action Plans into government planning and budgeting systems.
3. The programme should further strengthen commercial market linkages while scaling-up low-cost and locally viable alternatives such as organic composting (e.g., Bokashi), ensuring that productivity gains can be sustained without external subsidies.
4. Field evidence indicates that access to financial services significantly strengthens household resilience, particularly for women. Models such as SRSP Village Banks should be scaled to provide sustainable and accessible financing pathways for climate-resilient investments without increasing household vulnerability during shocks.

6. Gender & Inclusion

Key Conclusions

1. The programme significantly improved women's participation, confidence, and access to resources, contributing to enhanced household decision-making and economic empowerment.
2. Inclusion of 18,198 persons with disabilities improved participation, though largely at a symbolic level, with limited representation in leadership roles.
3. Despite progress, structural barriers continue to limit women's leadership and full participation in decision-making processes.

Key Recommendations

1. Introduce Leadership Representation: Advocate for and support minimum 30% representation of women in decision-making roles within community structures, while ensuring such representation within project-supported forums (e.g., VCAFs/UCAFs). This should be complemented by leadership training and capacity-building to enable sustainable and meaningful participation."
2. Provide Targeted Capacity Building: Offer leadership coaching and institutional support to enable women and vulnerable groups to take on leadership roles.

B. Conclusions and Recommendations by Programme Outputs

Output 1: Climate Adaptation Forums, Governance & Inclusion

Key Conclusions	Key Recommendations
• The programme successfully established and scaled inclusive community institutions (VCAFs/UCAFs), with strong evidence of community ownership and participation. • Women's participation has improved significantly; however, their presence in decision-making and leadership roles remains limited due to prevailing social norms. • Inclusion of vulnerable groups, including PWDs and elderly, has improved, but functional inclusion and accessibility gaps still exist. • Linkages with government institutions have been established but require further strengthening for long-term sustainability.	• Strengthen the functionality and sustainability of VCAFs/UCAFs through continuous mentoring, refresher trainings, and structured restrengthening mechanisms. • Promote and encourage increased participation of women in executive and decision-making roles within all forums, while respecting community dynamics and local contexts. Introduce targeted leadership coaching and mentoring programmes for women to enhance their confidence and engagement in public decision-making. • Institutionalize community-level public inclusion audits and town hall meetings to enhance transparency and accountability.

	• Improve physical accessibility of forums and infrastructure to ensure meaningful participation of PWDs and elderly. • Further strengthen the formal linkages between VCAFs/UCAFs and DDMA and line departments for institutional embedding. • Promote and scale community-led initiatives (e.g., early warning systems, social support mechanisms) to sustain resilience gains.
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Output 2: Climate-Resilient Livelihoods & Agriculture

Key Conclusions	Key Recommendations
• Climate-smart agriculture and irrigation interventions have significantly improved productivity, reduced losses, and strengthened household resilience. • The introduction of improved open-pollinated maize and wheat seed varieties has enhanced community access to quality seeds for subsequent planting seasons, supporting continuity and longer-term sustainability beyond direct project support. • Geographic disparities persist, with highland areas facing agro-climatic and market access constraints.	• Ensure timely delivery of agricultural inputs aligned with local cropping calendars, especially in highland districts. • Promote cost-sharing and sustainable financing models to reduce dependency on project inputs. • Scale up context-specific climate-smart agriculture practices tailored to different agro-climatic zones. • Strengthen access to affordable inputs and local supply chains, including seeds, fertilizers, and storage technologies. • Expand and maintain irrigation, watershed, and water management systems for long-term resilience. • Introduce and scale-up localized agricultural solutions for highland regions, including short-duration crops and climate-adapted practices. • Improve post-harvest management and storage systems to reduce losses and enhance food security.

Output 3: Skills Development, Employment & Private Sector Linkages

Key Conclusions	Key Recommendations
• The programme successfully enhanced employability and income levels, with strong outcomes in vocational training and job placements. • However, a significant proportion of beneficiaries remain in low-income brackets, indicating the need for progression pathways. • Market linkages are partially effective, with local market saturation and limited access to broader markets affecting outcomes. • Structural barriers such as lack of start-up capital, equipment, and digital access	• Introduce advanced (Level 2) technical training programmes to enable beneficiaries to move into higher income brackets. • Strengthen market linkages and private sector engagement, including connections to urban and national/ international markets. • Establish collective marketing platforms and business hubs to address local market saturation. • Provide start-up support packages, including tools, equipment, and access to finance for trained individuals. • Expand women-focused enterprise models and value chain [such as BRAVE Women brand introduced by AKF with LSE support]

limit the full potential of trained individuals.	integration to enhance economic empowerment. • Address the digital divide by improving access to internet, electricity, and digital tools for trainees in remote areas. • Scale up successful financial inclusion models to enhance access to credit and enterprise development opportunities.
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Output 4: Institutional Strengthening & Public Sector Engagement

Key Conclusions	Key Recommendations
• The programme has made strong progress in building institutional capacity and engaging government stakeholders. • However, institutionalization of Climate Action Plans within government systems remains at an early stage. • Evidence of government ownership exists but requires stronger financial and policy commitment. • Coordination mechanisms are functional but need further strengthening for scale and sustainability.	• Institutionalize Climate Action Plans within district and provincial planning and budgeting systems. • Strengthen government ownership through co-financing and resource allocation mechanisms. • Expand capacity building of line departments on climate adaptation and risk-informed planning. • Scale up and institutionalize Knowledge Hubs as permanent technical platforms within the government architecture. • Improve multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms between government, private sector, and partners. • Strengthen data systems, monitoring frameworks, and evidence generation to inform policy decisions. • Promote replication and scaling of successful models across districts and provinces.

Cross-Cutting Conclusions and Recommendations

Key Conclusions	Key Recommendations
• The programme has achieved strong results in resilience building, livelihoods, and institutional strengthening, • Gender inclusion has improved significantly, but deep-rooted social norms continue to limit transformative change. • Implementation challenges such as harsh weather/climate shocks, short window for seasonal activities particularly in highland resulting compressed timelines for implementation affected efficiency. • Sustainability of outcomes depends on market systems, institutional embedding, and continued support mechanisms.	• Further strengthen market systems and value chains to ensure long-term sustainability of livelihood interventions. • Promote gender transformation by moving beyond participation to leadership and decision-making roles. • Ensure better implementation planning considering the different geographic context, climate shock and short window for the agriculture activities.

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