Empowering Communities: Poverty Graduation in Pakistan

This session will highlight Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund’s (PPAF) journey with the Graduation Approach, which began in 2008 as a pilot project. The Graduation Approach offers a comprehensive pathway out of poverty, focusing on social protection, financial inclusion, livelihood enhancement, and social empowerment. Through statistically significant increases in consumption, income, and wealth, PPAF’s programme has demonstrated the transformative impact on treated households (Banerjee et al., 2015). The four pillars of the approach will be analysed showcasing the real-life impact through third-party evaluations, revealing how communities have uplifted themselves through the Fund’s interventions. Additionally, discussion will be held on the inclusion of the Graduation Programme in the national agenda and its implementation across 23 districts and 386 Union Councils, facilitated by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) under the government’s National Poverty Graduation Initiative.

PPAF, in collaboration with the Lahore School Economics, has undertaken a census study of third-tier organisations of the country. A presentation will be made on endline study results reflecting on the role of community institutions in fostering social and economic empowerment. The institutions provide a platform for vulnerable groups to voice their concerns and needs; ensure inclusivity in their programmes and initiatives; provide capacity building and skills development opportunities that empower individuals with the knowledge and expertise to improve their livelihoods and contribute to community growth.

The panel discussion will bring together experts to discuss the impact of these approaches on the ground with the following objectives:

- Present and explain Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund’s Poverty Graduation approach, highlighting its importance in uplifting the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized in Pakistan.
- Showcase the role of community institutions in fostering social and economic empowerment at the grassroots level.
- Discuss strategies for scaling up poverty graduation programme and building sustainable models that can continue to uplift communities beyond the project’s duration.

Reference

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1 This trial was part of a global study under which six randomised trials in Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Pakistan, and Peru with a total of 10,495 participants were conducted.
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