

The Learning Region: A Development Centre for Berwari Bala

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Abbreviated version of the project proposal

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1. Our earlier contribution to reconstruction in Berwari Bala

The preceding DhK-projekt ‚Reconstruction in Berwari Bala‘, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and by DhK (P 00.1573.5/Iraq), could only be a drop in the ocean although it left a strong impact. Only a few villages and only part of their population could be supported with the limited resources. Even with the restricted scope it was, however, possible to establish the first secondary school in the area.

The DhK-philosophy to improve the economic conditions by mobilizing endogenous potentials proved to be adequate. The distribution of animals, the repair of irrigation systems and the use of local building materials pointed in the right direction for sustainable development. The restoration of the villages of Cidide and Seferiya proved that using local building materials is economically feasible and at the same time sustainable. The repatriation of Assyrian families in Cidide contributed to peaceful cohabitation of Christians and Kurds.

The project completed the following activities:

- The Assyrian village Cidide and the Kurdish-Muslim village Seferiya have been reconstructed. In these villages, 31 new houses with 7.753 m³ of housing space could be built accommodating 51 repatriated families with 283 members.
- In the village of Qumri a secondary school was installed admitting 265 children and youths out of 20 villages. The school opened with the 2001-2002 term. The graduation rate of almost 80 percent is a big success.
- In the villages of Cidide, Qumri and Girka irrigation systems have been constructed to intensify agricultural production. In Qumri and Girka the farmers could double the harvest of apples by means of the new irrigation systems. In Cidide, where the orchards

had to be planted anew with the reconstruction of the village in 2002, the first harvest could be celebrated.

- The returnees in Cidide and Seferiya received 120 sheep, while 100 cows could be distributed to the neediest households in Cem Seyida. The distribution was organized following the model of an animal bank. One out of two cows calved and the calves were distributed to additional peasant families.
- The Communal Development Centre was constructed and a management concept developed (see below). The inauguration was celebrated on Nov. 11, 2010 together with local and regional politicians and administrators and in cooperation between KURDS and DhK.
- The project was implemented in close collaboration with the target group.

With these activities the supply of products from irrigated vegetable gardens and animal husbandry for own consumption and the production of apples for the market could be considerably increased.

The initial help which provided the returnees in the villages a new but limited livelihood can be duly considered exemplary, but it was not sufficient in the light of the large number of households in need. With the new political and administrative framework after the 2003 war there is room and potential to improve the capacity for self-help and self-organisation, especially in cooperating with public authorities and development organisations. The follow-up project is meant to contribute to this new opportunity.

2. Project specification

2.1. Target group and project location

The project target group of the new project are the villages and peasants of Berwari Bala.

Between 1980 and 1982, all villages in this area have been destroyed by the Iraqi central government. The villagers have been deported to newly built collected villages (*mucamme*). The families have been practically expropriated and lost all means for agricultural subsistence and income generation.

In 1992, after the Kuwait War, deportees returned to their devastated villages and were confronted with multiple challenges. House construction and establishing livelihoods were the major needs of the peasant families. Public services and technical infrastructure were no longer functional and had to be repaired or re-installed.

2.2. Project aims

The main aim of the project is to reduce poverty in the Berwari Bala region by means of rural regional development. In addition, the project aims at increasing the capacity for self-organisation and administration and at improving agriculture and education.

These aims and respective indicators can be detailed as follows:

- Improve the capacity for self-organisation and administration to mobilise endogenous potentials:
 - in each village at least two village assemblies have been organized;
 - one out of two women have participated in further training and skill enhancement activities;
 - at least two further training sessions or consultative workshops each year with village elders and local administrators have been conducted;
 - regular meetings of village councils have been administered.

- Improve agricultural productivity, increase output (apples, figs, vegetables) and enhance animal husbandry:
 - 80 percent of farmers have participated in agricultural extension programmes;
 - regional marketing of agricultural produce, esp. apples, from the project area has been stabilised;
 - animal husbandry has been improved and stabilised;
 - incomes have been raised by 20 percent.
- Improve the educational sector to advance teaching quality and participation of rural children in further education:
 - at least two training sessions with teachers have been administered;
 - two workshops with administrators, village elders and teachers have been conducted;
 - the drop-out rate has been halved.

In order to monitor project progress and performance, indicators concerning demography, social development, education, health, agriculture and land use in the project area will be collected and analysed.

2.3. Measures and tools to achieve the project aims

The following measures will be taken to achieve the project aims:

- extension of the Community Development Centre;
- extension and consultation services to promote agriculture and communal development.

2.3.1. Extension of the Community Development Centre (CDC)

The Community Development Centre constitutes the core of the project because of its vital importance for the extension, consultation and coordination activities. Its main purpose is the facilitation of rural-regional development activities.

The Centre will support development of the project area by advising farmers, organising training programmes and coordinating the sectoral activities of various actors to improve village structures. The focus will lie on participation and self-organisation of local communities. Coordination of individual activities by the Centre can help to create synergies and avoid mutual interference. Experience gathered through the Centre is likely to be of relevance for rural development in throughout Northern Iraq.

The Centre will be charged with the following tasks:

- training and extension services for peasant families to improve agriculture and animal husbandry, to foster sustainable land use, and to develop marketing strategies for local products;
- training and further education for teachers and local administrators;
- building a data base for the area and analyse and supply information;
- coordinating development activities of organisations active in the area;
- raising awareness for nature and environmental protection, e.g. concerning the use and protection of grazing land;
- improving the life of women and children; and
- facilitating participation of all stakeholders in regional-rural development.

The Community Development Centre has been constructed under the preceding project P 00.1573.5 with contributions by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). It comprises of a large room for conferences and training sessions accommodating up to 50 participants, an office, a kitchen and sanitary facilities.

The Centre has been equipped with furniture and basic computer and communication technology by KRG; the equipment will be complemented under the new project. The Centre is surrounded by a large garden with can be used for test and demonstration projects with fruit trees and vegetables.

The Centre will be managed by KURDS in cooperation with the KRG Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry will detach its staff for training and extension programmes.

Management of the Centre will require two half-time positions. One female and one male staff will jointly run the Centre and manage its activities.

2.3.2. Budgeting

With project start financial means for office supplies, transport and study tours will have to be supplied. To execute the program sketched out above, budgets for honorariums, catering, teaching material, transport and other needs arising with the preparation and execution of training sessions, workshops and conferences will have to be provided.

2.4. Duration and evaluation

The project has been scheduled for a period of three years. The performance of the project will be evaluated at the end of each year.

2.5. Follow-up costs

The project has been designed in such a way that after its finalisation the activities will be self-supporting or continued by KRG as agreed upon in a MOU between the Ministry of Agriculture and DhK.

Responsibilities and property issues have been settled for all activities.

At the end of the project DhK will decide jointly with KURDS and the Ministry of Agriculture on how to continue the project.